Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

SUZANNE SEKERAK BUTCHER

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Suzanne, let's start at the beginning. Could you tell me where and when you were born, and a little about your family?

BUTCHER: I was born November 4, 1948 in Erie, Pennsylvania. My father was an electronics technician for General Electric and I lived in one house from the time I was born until I went to college. While I was in college, my parents moved across town, from the city to a suburb. My first introduction to anything international was that my mother's sister was a Foreign Service secretary. She lived abroad, moving every couple of years. She would come through town on home leave, and bringing interesting gifts from various places. That seemed very exotic to me.

Q: What was your family background? Let's take your father's side first.

BUTCHER: Ethnicity?

Q: Yes, ethnicity, where they come from and education.

BUTCHER: His parents came from Slovakia around 1912 or so. He was born in Wyoming but came to Corry, Pennsylvania, when he was four years old. He grew up on a farm. My mother was from Amarillo, Texas and they met during World War II. Daddy was serving down in Amarillo. They married and came back to Erie, Pennsylvania and raised four kids in a very typical, 1950s, mom-pop-and-four-kids family, born between 1947 and 1958.Q: Did your parents go to college?

BUTCHER: My father took some night school classes while I was young.

Q: What was Erie, Pennsylvania like? We are talking about the 1950s, mainly.

BUTCHER: The main employers were General Electric, where my father worked, Hammermill Paper, and also a lot of other smaller industries. It was a very ethnic town - German, Slovaks, Polish, Italian. I grew up in a Byzantine Catholic Church, where the Mass was in Slovak. My grandmother didn't speak English.

Q: How about school? Where did you go to school?

BUTCHER: Burton Elementary School, two blocks from my house. I could walk to school and home for lunch. I went to Wilson Junior High School and Academy High School. We had kids who were black and white, wealthy and poor.

Q: In elementary school, were there any teachers or subjects that began to interest you?

BUTCHER: No, nothing in particular in elementary school. I took French in junior high and enjoyed that. Then, in high school, I took French and Spanish. I generally got along very well with teachers, but I could not stand the Spanish teacher. Still, I liked Spanish. I think that told me something, that I liked the language even though I didn't like the teacher.

Q: It really does.

BUTCHER: I remember telling my high school guidance counselor that I had no idea what I wanted to study when I went to college. She asked me, "Well, what do you like, what do you enjoy?" and I said Spanish. So when I first went to college, I was going to major in Spanish. I soon realized that I didn't want to be a Spanish teacher and do Spanish Language and Literature. I took a couple political science courses and shifted over to a Poli Sci major, but I took French, Spanish, German and Russian classes. I was interested in the languages as useful tools rather than as Language and Literature.

Q: Back when you were in elementary and high school, do any books stick out or a type of reading? Were there any particular books that really interested you?

BUTCHER: I remember in junior high reading all the typical girl books.

Q: Cherry Ames, Nancy Drew, I guess?

BUTCHER: I read some Nancy Drew but it was more the girl-falling-in-love-with-the-boy next door books, rather than adventurous Nancy Drew stuff. I don't think what I read gave any indication of future adventurousness. Another thing I should mention is that I was a Girl Scout. My mother was our troop leader when I was little. I went on with it in junior high and high school. One of my Girl Scout friends hosted a foreign exchange student from Latin America when we were in high school, so I got to know her pretty well, and I remember enjoying the weekend when a big group of AFS students came to town.

I came to Washington, DC on a couple of Girl Scout opportunities. I went to the Girl Scout National Roundup in Idaho, the summer between junior and senior year. Then, the summer after I graduated from high school, I went to Peru. All the Girl Scouts in the United States drop their pennies and dimes into the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund to make international opportunities like this possible. I remember getting called to the assistant principal's office when the letter came in the mail and my Mom called the school to tell me. The Girl Scouts in Peru were having a big anniversary gathering with a few representatives from other countries. Four of us came from the United States.

Q: How wonderful.

BUTCHER: I spent six weeks in Peru.

Q: How did Peru impress you at the time?

BUTCHER: It was an incredible experience for a seventeen year old from Erie, PA. I had been across the border to Niagara Falls, but that was it. The first family I lived with was in what, I guess, would be considered a lower middle-class neighborhood, with a sweet girl as my "sister." Her English wasn't very good and my Spanish wasn't very good, but we did ok. The whole extended family met me at the airport, then took me to a circus that lasted late into the night, with me half asleep. The neighborhood wasn't a slum, but it wasn't a wealthy family at all. I ended up with bronchitis so they moved me to a suburb to stay with an upper-class woman who was a Scout organizer. You could really see the difference in living. She would lock up the cabinets, afraid the maids would steal the china. Then I moved to another family with a daughter my age, but she wasn't a Girl Scout. She thought Girl Scouting was a charity organization. Her mother was a volunteer.

Q: I think the scouting movement in many other countries, including Europe, often did not hit the upper classes.

BUTCHER: We had an adult who traveled with us, who was from New Orleans. She and her troop were very upper class. Even among the four of us who went - one from Colorado, one from Georgia, one from East St. Louis, not a very prosperous part of St. Louis, me from Erie, Pennsylvania - even among the four of us, we were quite a diverse group, which was good.

Q: That's very good. Did this plant any seeds in you, going to Peru?

BUTCHER: I'm sure that is part of what led me to major in Spanish, and be interested in Latin America, in particular. I shifted from Spanish to Political Science, since Allegheny College didn't have an international study major at that time.

Q: You went to Allegheny College for four years, right?

BUTCHER: Right.

Q: You were there from when to when?

BUTCHER: 1966 to 1970.

Q: What was Allegheny College like at that time?

BUTCHER: A typical, very good, ivy-covered, small liberal arts college. It was during the Vietnam War and there were war protests, seminars, etc., particularly after the killings at Kent State in 1970. I remember we had a hall telephone, not phones in the rooms like they have now. We took messages for each other and wrote the messages on a list on the wall for everyone to see. Just a day or two after Kent State there was a message for me that the State Department had called. It was about a summer job, but it was kind of odd to have a call from the State Department listed by my name in the atmosphere of those days, when anybody having to do with government was considered suspect.

Q: You were in the Political Science department, and all that, how did the Vietnam War play with you personally and with your friends?

BUTCHER: We were not radical, but we were somewhat involved. We had candlelight vigils rather than burning down buildings. I think when the concerns about Vietnam spread to places like Allegheny College, it was clear that it was not just radical leftists at big universities.

Q: It wasn't just the Columbia-Berkeley type protest. It really had much deeper roots. How about your faculty? Were you getting, sort of, a world view from the faculty about, not just Vietnam, but other things?

BUTCHER: The lead international people were the department chair, Wayne Merrick, who did Poli Sci theory, and Giles Wayland-Smith, a young professor who had lived in Chile. I was fascinated with his experiences. I took every comparative course they had, one on Latin America, one that was supposed to be on Europe but was basically on Britain and France, and one on the Soviet Union.

Q: Had the Foreign Service interest grown during this? Was this there, or what were you thinking of doing?

BUTCHER: I worked for the State Department the summer after my sophomore year and each summer after that. I also spent a semester junior year at American University in Washington. It was a great program on all branches of government, but I focused on international issues as much as I could. Certainly by the beginning of my senior year I knew I wanted to join the Foreign Service. The test was given the first Saturday in December. I applied for a Fulbright in Chile, I applied to Stanford to do Latin American studies, and I applied to the Foreign Service. If I hadn't gotten into any of those three, I have no idea what I would have done. But, any of those would have been good. I did not get the Fulbright. I got into Stanford, with a fellowship for Latin American studies.

Q: What were you doing at your summer work at State?

BUTCHER: I was a GS-4 clerk typist.

Q: Where and when?BUTCHER: The first year I was in the Leave and Retirement Office. Another summer intern wrote the letters and I typed the letters to people who were retiring, telling them how wonderful they were and what a service they had done for their country. Of course, the guy wrote the letters, and the girl typed the letters. That was in the days even before you had mag cards. It was typed on a typewriter. If you made a mistake, you started over, because they were signed by the Secretary of State. The next year, I wanted to work in ARA, the Inter-American Affairs Bureau, but I was assigned to the India desk in NEA. It was a very good experience because it was a desk, whatever desk it was. The Vice President went to India that year, and so I was typing papers for the Vice President, which I thought was pretty exciting.

Q: Was this exposure to the State Department addictive?

BUTCHER: Well, there was no doubt in my mind that I was going to take the Foreign Service exam. If I didn't make it, I was going to Stanford, and then take the Foreign Service exam again. My whole purpose in going to graduate school was not to become an academic. It was to get into the State Department.

Q: Let's talk a little bit about Stanford.

BUTCHER: Let me say one other thing on the summer employment. My first year, I applied to both State and AID. I got a job in AID's Public Safety Office. I was only there for a week or so when the State Department called. I was working as a GS-3 there, and the State Department offered GS-4. My boss at AID told me to take it, so I did. But it is kind of interesting that my first work was in the Public Safety Office, which, although I didn't know it at the time, became notorious for training human rights violators. This ties into something we will talk about later, when I was working on the Administration of Justice Program, many years later.

Q: You were in Stanford from when to when?BUTCHER: I was going to go to Stanford for Latin American studies in 1970, right after my B.A. I was working for the Department that summer. I got a call on a Friday to come for my Foreign Service oral on Tuesday. So, I read every newspaper and news magazine I could get my hands on that weekend. I passed the oral and on that Friday, they called and said, "Can you start in two weeks?" I called Stanford and told them to give the fellowship to someone else.

Q: Let's talk a little bit about the oral exam. Do you recall any of the questions or how it went?

BUTCHER: The first question they asked me was about the Hickenlooper Amendment, which required the U.S. to cut off aid if a country expropriated property of U.S. citizens. I had done a paper on a similar law that required cutoff of sugar quotas in expropriation cases. So the first question was something that I could easily answer. I think that made a big difference. I will never know if I was just lucky or if somebody somehow knew this was a subject I knew. Probably not.

Q: I doubt it. In 1975, 1976, I was an oral examiner. We didn't know that much. We knew generally the background of the person but not what they would have known.

BUTCHER: I had done my major paper at American University on getting the sugar quota provision through Congress. After that question, I forget what all they asked. Some examiners had lunch with several of us several months later to talk about the oral exam process. I remember commenting to one examiner that the questions seemed sort of superficial. They sort of bounced all over the place, rather than going into depth on anything. He said that it was interesting that I thought that way because what they were impressed with was the breadth of my knowledge of comparative politics. I was a 21-year-old kid from Allegheny College who had taken three Poli Sci courses on comparative politics! But then I also very well remember them asking, "Okay, pretend you are at a cocktail party and a French diplomat comes up and puts down American culture, how would you talk about American culture?" I really bombed. I have no idea what I said. But, I think they always try to find something that you don't know and see how you handle yourself when you don't know.

Q: I think part of the philosophy behind this was to hit many things. So, you really couldn't go into depth too much, but they almost seemed to be saying, "You seem to know something about this, let's move on." But, also to see how you conduct yourself, because in a way, the written exam says this is a pretty bright person, they have been around. They know a lot of stuff, so we are trying to see what kind of person you are because there are exam takers. Some people do wonderfully on written exams. We are talking about diplomats who are supposed to be out in front of people, and some of these types would make very poor public presenters of the nation.

BUTCHER: When I look back now at myself, I was 21, I had 1960s hair, long, straight, down to my waist, with short skirts. To go from being a college kid to being in the Foreign Service in a couple of months, was quite amazing. On the other hand, since I had worked the summers, I knew my way around the halls. I knew what a deputy assistant secretary was and how that differs from an undersecretary. When our class started, I knew my way around more than anyone else in the class, and that gave me more self-confidence than I would have had otherwise.

Q: In college, were you caught up in folk singing and sitting around with a guitar?

BUTCHER: Oh, yes.

Q: Did that give you any feel for American culture?

BUTCHER: When I answered that question, I didn't even think of the U.S. and popular culture. I was thinking that I didn't know anything about art and opera.

Q: Before I went to the exam, I memorized names of operas. Nobody asked me a damn thing about operas, but I thought you were supposed to know. This was 1970 - the Vietnam War was still on, the protest was still on, things were beginning to change. But, were you given a rough time by any of your compatriots about going to work for the monster?

BUTCHER: While I thought twice about having my name up on the dorm phone list with the message from the State Department, I don't remember people saying anything. Actually, I didn't get in until the summer, but my friends knew I had applied.

Q: Did the question come up during the oral exam about whether you were going to get married and leave us, and do you really want this for a career or not?

BUTCHER: The first year I was a summer employee, this would have been 1968, the Director General had a reception for all of the summer employees. When I asked him why there were so few female officers, he said it didn't really make sense to bring women in because they only stayed in 1.9 years, on average. Well, if you make them resign when they marry, of course, many aren't going to stay in! They didn't actually ask anything about that in the oral exam. At that time, you took the oral and if you passed it, then they asked you which cone you wanted to be in. When they asked me, I said, "political." The examiner said, "Well, you know, consular really gives you a lot of gratification. You work directly with people, get immediate feedback." I said, "No, I want to be in the political section." There was definitely some steering there, probably because I was a woman.

Q: How about the other three children in your family? What did they do?

BUTCHER: My two sisters studied Elementary Education, though one later went back for an MBA. My brother, who is 10 years younger, studied landscape architecture. None of them have ever lived overseas.Q: Can you kind of characterize the A-100, the basic Officer's course, when you came in?

BUTCHER: It was six weeks long. It was a series of speakers, mainly. One after another. There were only 15 state officers in my class, and seven USIA, with two State women and two USIA women. We were a very small and very close-knit class. Up until the summer we came in, the guys were all sent to Vietnam. It was a good group of folks and we have kept up with a lot of them through the years. I remember the relationships with the other people, more than what we actually learned in the class. We were very proud that at the off-site, our class beat the disarmament game, which no class had ever done before. We did it by swapping observers but constantly rotating them so no observer could be bought off. I remember being impressed by Ambassador Marshall Green at the off-site, that he would sit around and talk with us about things that mattered like population growth. A lot of A-100 was teaching basically how things work in the department and embassies, things I had picked up in three summers working for the department.

Q: So, you were sort of the "old hand" guiding the new recruits.

BUTCHER: I was a 21 year old "old hand."

Q: That's a great feeling.

BUTCHER: It was. I think it made a big difference. My husband and I always tell the story that the first weekend after they arrived, I invited everybody over to my basement apartment up on Calvert Street. Everybody found it except one guy, Larry Butcher. He got lost, because he didn't know Washington, DC had northwest, southwest, northeast and southeast. He was looking in the wrong section of town.

Q: What was the background, mainly, of the class?BUTCHER: Four of us were straight out of undergraduate. Most of the people had been either in the Peace Corps or military or graduate school. I don't think people had worked at another career very much. One guy had a J.D. degree; one guy had been an Air Force officer, and two or three others had had military experience.

Q: Did Vietnam, what we were doing there, loom very large in either class discussions or when you were together?

BUTCHER: I don't remember that it did, frankly. People were glad to be going to other places, not Vietnam. A speaker came to talk about Vietnam and encourage people to volunteer for CORDS in Vietnam, but nobody did. Larry asked him how long he thought the South Vietnamese government would last after U.S. troops left and he said two years, which was about right.

We had six weeks of A-100, then six weeks of consular training. That was in the days before ConGen Rosslyn. So, that, too, was just people standing up in front of the class explaining the Foreign Affairs Manual. Then, you take your exams.

Q: Was Alice Curren in charge of it at the time?

BUTCHER: I don't remember.

Q: It was pretty awful.

BUTCHER: It was pretty awful.

Q: I am sort of a consular specialist in my time. We felt that that damn course was poisoning the well.

BUTCHER: I think so, but ConGen Rosslyn was much better. Q: Well, did you find it sort of a continuation of college, from your point of view, or was this obviously a more mature gang?

BUTCHER: Definitely, a whole new world.

Q: As you were doing this, what were you picking out? You said you wanted to be in the political cone. Any area, was it Latin America?

BUTCHER: Latin America, at that point. I went to Guadalajara. The class started in August and I left in November, so I was only there for the three months, while most everyone else stayed for language training. I met Larry in Oklahoma for Christmas and we were engaged. In January, they changed the rules so women officers did not have to resign when they married. We were married in July, so we were one of the first tandem couples. I never had to leave the Service. A lot of women of that generation resigned and then were brought back in.

Q: But, you went to Guadalajara?

BUTCHER: Yes.

Q: You were in Guadalajara from when to when?

BUTCHER: November 1970 until May 1971.

Q: What was Guadalajara like at that time?

BUTCHER: It was great. It was a big city without being the capital. I was doing American Citizen Services. There was a huge number of elderly Americans living there. There were three American Citizen Services officers, plus a Social Security rep. One was the deaths officer. I did passports and citizenship, and I was the veterans affairs officer. We had a large visa section, where I helped sometimes. There was an admin officer and also a second-tour officer who was the catch-all political, economic, everything officer who did anything substantive that came up, with the Consul General. I loved the city. I loved going down to the market. To me, it was a big city, a foreign city.

Q: Drugs weren't a big thing yet. Who was Consul General?

BUTCHER: Bill Connett. We had an FBI rep, but no DEA.

Q: Was there any junior training or was it, "get out there and do the job?"

BUTCHER: It was very much, "get out there and do the job." The other two American Citizen Services officers were helpful, also the Mexican employees.

Q: Guadalajara was and I guess still is a place where a tremendous number of Americans have gone to settle, usually on retirement. What was your impression of that community?

BUTCHER: The people I dealt with were mostly the people who had problems. I didn't have a whole lot of happy people out there, except when I could make a positive citizenship finding. I ended up dealing with the veterans who had problems, the disabled veterans who needed medical services and vets who were having a hard time getting their education benefits from the VA. We had a wonderful woman at the hospital. We would work together in getting the guys in wheelchairs what they needed. The VA was very frustrating.

Q: Did you have any feel for Mexican authorities?

BUTCHER: It was my first exposure to Latin American university politics. I began to realize there was a lot of crookedness going on. Q: What was your husband to be, at that time, up to?

BUTCHER: After four months on the Venezuela desk, he was getting ready to study Spanish to go to Caracas, Venezuela.

Q: How did you figure things would work out? I'm talking about before things worked out.

BUTCHER: Well, I was expecting to have to resign, although we kind of knew by then that things couldn't go on this way. We thought that we would give it a shot and ask for a transfer. But, we weren't expecting a clear change of policy. The Director General held a meeting January 23, 1971 and announced it. Larry was going to lunch and there was a poster in the elevator saying the Director General is going to speak on the future of women in the Foreign Service. So, he went. There was a clear change in policy, but then, just a couple weeks later, Sheldon Krys, who was the Executive Director of ARA...

Q: I know Sheldon. I have interviewed Sheldon.

BUTCHER: I have heard so many people who have such a good, warm feeling about Sheldon Krys, from how he dealt with the hostage families. My experience with him was not good. He said, "Well, I suppose young love must run in its course, but the needs of the service..." He was not for the change of policy at all and wasn't going to do anything to get Larry and me together. What actually happened was, Larry went to lunch with Bob Chavez, who was assigned to go to Caracas later that spring. He said, "Bob, how would you like to go to Guadalajara, instead?" John Day in Personnel agreed to switch the assignment, and I came back in May, and Larry and I were married in July and went to Caracas. Bob went to Guadalajara and met his wife and we all "lived happily ever after." I did have the feeling when I was in Guadalajara, the guys I worked with were great guys but they didn't really expect me to be a serious officer because I was a young woman.Q: Of course, there was this feeling, and it wasn't completely without reason. It wasn't even a rule, it was a custom, that there would be a resignation. It was terribly male chauvinistic but you kind of looked at somebody and said, "Is she marriageable or not?" If she was "marriageable," it was almost a write-off.

BUTCHER: Maybe there wasn't a written rule, but they wouldn't transfer you together, so there might as well have been.

Q: It was a mind set that has changed considerably.

BUTCHER: It took time.

Q: It took time. Also, the role of males and not just females. So, then you went to Caracas from when to when?

BUTCHER: 1971 to 1973.

Q: What job did you have there?

BUTCHER: I was in the consular section first, and then the political section for 18 months. Bill Luers was head of the political section. I think of him as my first boss. I worked with others in Guadalajara and Joe Brownell was a good visa section chief in Caracas, but Bill was the one who taught me. He was my mentor. I think it caused some resentment within the consular section, when I moved over to the political section and stayed there.

Q: What I would like to do now is talk about Caracas. What was Caracas like, - I'm really thinking of Venezuela as a whole, what was it like then?

BUTCHER: A vibrant big city but more pleasant than I think it is now. It already had crazy traffic and all that but was less congested and less polluted than it is now. The population of Venezuela was 11 million. It is about 22 million now. I really enjoyed Venezuela and the Venezuelans. A lot of people didn't like Venezuelans because of all the flash and brash. I really enjoyed it - the people and the politics. They had gone from a terrible dictatorship to a democracy, not a perfect democracy of course, but they had had regular elections since 1958, electing two governments from Accion Democratica and then the opposition Copei, the Christian Democrats. I found all of this fascinating. It has moved on a long way since then, not for the better. It was just a fun city.

Q: Was it easy to get along with the Venezuelans - as far as getting to know them?

BUTCHER: Yes, I found it to be.

Q: Who was the Ambassador while you were there?

BUTCHER: Robert McClintock.

Q: He was very much the old school.

BUTCHER: Definitely. But I liked the work. It was a lot of fun. I remember the first time I went to a lunchtime political gathering, some kind of midday party. I went with Bill, before I had even moved over to the political section. I ran into somebody that I had denied a visa. I don't remember what the story was, but he was denied for some political reason, probably membership in a communist party. We had a great conversation and he introduced me around, which gave Bill, my new boss, the impression that I could really work a crowd. Just luck that it was someone I sort of knew and that he was engaging and not hostile. I loved writing up the reports and doing the bio files. I was still only 22 at that point.

Q: Were we relaxed about the political system then?BUTCHER: I think we were quite happy with it. AD and Copei were acceptable. When Copei was elected it was the first time there was a transition from one party to another, which was quite unusual in Latin America, then.

Q: I was going to say it's one of the very few.

BUTCHER: It was the only democracy in South America besides Chile. Sometimes there were student demonstrations and there was the guerilla movement that had been far more active in the early 1960s. Some people who were in that guerilla movement are now in the government in Venezuela. It's fun to see their names pop up here and there. One of the leading radicals, Jose Vicente Rangel, became Minister of Defense. I haven't continued to follow it that much, but we were, of course, always concerned about communists. We were fairly comfortable with the government then...

Q: Was Castro somebody everybody looked over their shoulder at?

BUTCHER: Definitely, as supporting the guerillas.

Q: Were there any landings of arms or people at all, or was that earlier on?

BUTCHER: That was earlier. I remember being more involved with those jockeying for position within the government... I know there was some tension between Bill Luers and the CIA station about who would work which contacts among the people who were leftist but accessible.

Q: How did you find the political climate in Venezuela?

BUTCHER: It was very Latin American in the sense that there is an upper class and a much lower class. In general, I found it quite an open society, which I really enjoyed. It was really a vibrant, wide-open political game.Q: Do families play much of a role in the politics?

BUTCHER: Yes, but it wasn't like there was generation after generation of leadership. I mean, Carlos Andres Perez didn't come from one of the big families.

Q: I think he came up almost through the ranks.

BUTCHER: He was a party person.

Q: Going back to the consular side, what were you doing, outside of refusing political types visas?

BUTCHER: I remember Bill, at one point saying, after I got over to the political section, "Isn't this so much better than the consular section?" But I said I thought the consular section was interesting, too. As a political counselor, he was taken aback by that. At that point, I was young and idealistic and having a great time. I loved all that. Plus, it was so much more interesting than it was in Mexico. In Mexico, you were turning down Margarita after Susanita after Juanita who wanted to go visit their brother in California, who couldn't prove they were going to come back. In Venezuela, our refusal rate was lower and we had a much more international clientele. A lot of our applicants were either Venezuelan residents who were citizens of other countries or people who were coming through. There was much more of a variety of kinds of people.

Q: Miami or New York?

BUTCHER: Miami. I remember some difficult terrorism decisions came up with residents of Venezuela who were Middle Eastern and the question was who was Palestinian and who was Jewish.

Q: It was the beginning of black September - 1970, that period. This was beginning to develop. How about being a gringo?

BUTCHER: We were gringos. There was some sense of anti-Americanism, but I never personally felt threatened. There was very much resentment of Uncle Sam, but I didn't blame them for it, given our history in Latin America. We had a shot through our window once and of course that was very frightening. But the police came quickly and it turned out it was kid in a neighboring apartment building with a bb gun. When we came back after a vacation one time, we found out that someone tried to launch two mortars at the Embassy, but one was a dud and the other landed in the flower bed and didn't explode.

Q: How about the oil business? Did that impact at all?

BUTCHER: Sure, it was huge. The economic section had a wonderful petroleum officer, George Ogg. He was good on substance, and he was very good at handling Ambassador McClintock. As a junior officer in the political section, I didn't have so much to do with oil. That was later, as a desk officer, in 1979 to 1981.

Q: We'll pick that up later.

BUTCHER: Okay.

Q: What about Ambassador McClintock? Obviously, you were pretty far down the totem pole.

BUTCHER: It wasn't a very big totem pole. On one side of the top floor of the embassy, you had the ambassador and DCM, and the other side you had four political officers. I would be brought into meetings and be a note taker.

Q: What was your impression of McClintock, both as a person and as a manager and ambassador?

BUTCHER: Pompous. He used to say he and one consular officer could do everything that needed to be done in the Embassy, he didn't need anyone else. Not a very good way to make people feel their work was worthwhile. He would put people down in staff meetings, especially the poor Consul General.

Q: Did his poodle enter into things? One always thinks of - it was '58, when he met the American invasion on the beaches of Lebanon with his poodle.

BUTCHER: He loved to tell that story. He brought his poodle to the Embassy. He also had two Dobermans, which had attacked his wife, and he still kept them. The first political reception that I went to at the residence, the ambassador didn't say anything to me. But Bill Luers told me later that at the beginning of the party McClintock said to hipractically hisse"What's SHE doing here?" It was all men except for me. Bill said of course I was there, I was a political officer.

As we were leaving Caracas, I got pulled back to the consular section for the summer, after Bill Luers had been transferred back to Washington. Larry and I were trying to arrange our departure date. Larry was coming back to be a staff assistant to EB Deputy Assistant Secretary Jules Katz. He had to be back to Washington from home leave on a certain date. But the visa chief, Andy Sanchez, didn't want to let me leavhe thought I should go later and not have home leave with my husband. Claimed they needed me. But if I went with my husband, that would have left them for a couple of weeks with the same number of officers as they had had for the entire previous summer. They didn't really need me. I had the sense that he wanted to put me in my place, this was a young woman who was a political officer, and they were going to put her in her place.

Q: Yes, and it was fairly early on, early times, and the idea that you could have joint people together... I'm sure there was a lot of huffing and all that.BUTCHER: My personnel officer back here sent the cable, saying the departure date was such and such, that I was to leave, and I did. Then I got back and learned that the Ambassador had sent a flaming memo to Personnel that he wanted put in my personnel file. PER refused and said the Consul General would need to do an efficiency report. So, the Consul General wrote an efficiency report on my four or five weeks in the consular section. It was a totally damning efficiency report, which the grievance panel immediately threw out because it was completely contradicted by my previous report in the consular section. But, still, for a young officer, I was shaken by all this.

Q: Who was the consul general?

BUTCHER: George Phelan.

Q: It's a name I have heard of. I remember meeting ambassador McClintock only once, around 1959 or so, and I was in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. He insisted on being taken out to the Persian Gulf so he could swim. He said he swam everyday, which he used to do, I'm told, in Lebanon, in the middle of winter. He had his ways.

BUTCHER: Well, this business about me leaving, he called me into his office and said something like, "When I was in such and such place, I had to leave my wife, who was having a difficult pregnancy, and I did as I was told, and she had a miscarriage." He seemed to have no regrets about it. Seemed proud that he'd left her. Needs of the service and all that.

Q: What was your husband doing?

BUTCHER: He was in the Commercial Section.

Q: Is this his specialty, pretty much?

BUTCHER: Economics.

Q: I was going to say, going with Jules Katz, it's obvious he was on his way.

BUTCHER: He never did a day in consular.

Q: That rat. What was his background?

BUTCHER: His father was a welder with an eighth grade education from Ponca City, Oklahoma. His mother did upholstery. His brother, who is 8 years older than him, was in the Foreign Service.

Q: Where did he go to school?

BUTCHER: Larry went to Oklahoma State.

Q: Was his major economics?

BUTCHER: Political Science.

Q: Well, then you both came back to Washington? What was your assignment?

BUTCHER: This was the days when you didn't have open assignments. You would get a letter from your personnel officer... This was when they were just learning how to make tandems work. They didn't have the experience yet. We told Personnel we preferred to go outside the U.S., preferably not Latin America, because that was the only place we had been. We also said that it could be any combination of political, economic, and consular jobs. That was pretty broad. They came back and said, "Well, you can go to Santo Domingo, or Saigon, or Washington." So, we came back to Washington. Larry got the assignment as staff assistant to Jules Katz, which was great. I got assigned to the Cultural Bureau. Bill Luers wrote to the head of personnel and said they should put me on a desk or something, but no dice. It certainly seemed like they thought, "This is a woman, let's put her in the Cultural Bureau."

Q: Well, I talked with a lot of male officers who got there. This was not a plum assignment, by any means, but a lot of people went through that.

BUTCHER: But, a disproportionate number of women did.

Q: I'm sure.

BUTCHER: I was only there for one year. Like many of these experiences, it turned out better than I expected. I had a $500,000 budget that I managed. This was when the whole cultural program was in the State Department, rather than USIA. So, I decided who was going to go out as the American speakers to Latin America. But, Bill Luers, who had become the Deputy Executive Secretary, got me assigned to the Secretariat as an FSO-6, which was unusual.

Q: Oh, very good. Well, let's talk first about the Cultural Bureau. Where did it fit within the framework. Normally, one would have thought this would have been a USIA function. But, I think Fulbright, at the time, was opposed to keeping them together. He was keeping them separate, I'm not sure what. Who was running the Cultural Section you were with, the exchange?

BUTCHER: John Richardson was head of the bureau and Max Chaplin was the office director. Dwight Mason was our deputy director. Dick Arndt was there from USIA. I found him very interesting and helpful, with lots of good ideas.

Q: What specifically were your responsibilities?

BUTCHER: I was responsible for the cultural exchange program for Latin America. There was the International Visitors Program. That mainly was done by the Institute for InternationaEducation, a contractor. They would plan the schedule for the visitors. I would fairly often meet with the visitors, and so on. But, I don't remember that as taking a lot of my time, because I had an older man, a civil service employee, who worked for me, who made a lot of the arrangements. That was the first time I really supervised anybody. I mainly worked on the speakers. I worked with the USIA missions on their program plans, to figure out the American speakers, who would be going. Of course, we had lots of requests and I had to figure out who would be good where. When we were proposing to send a speaker, we had to have the person's home street address. It could not be their address at the university or post office box. It took me a while, later, to figure out that they must have been checking their voter registration - this was the Nixon White House.

Q: In Latin America, was there sort of a major plan of what we were trying to do in Latin America?

BUTCHER: I wouldn't say that I knew of an overarching plan. I remember sending out a speaker from the University of Wisconsin on agricultural economics, who I thought was fascinating. We were planning to send Louis Kahn, the architect, but he died just a couple of weeks before he was to go. There was a political scientist named Lincoln Bloomfield, who was also very good. He was into political systems and the whole push toward democracy. I don't think he was a Latin Americanist, but he was very interesting. I sent out Luigi Einaudi, an excellent Latin Americanist, who I ended up working for a decade later when he became director of the policy office in ARA. We tried a lot of different things. I guess the main theme was democracy and economic development.

Q: Well, how did you develop a stable? Was there sort of a book that you went down and looked around, or were you working on...

BUTCHER: The ideas generally came from the missions. If you saw a couple different posts requesting similar speakers, then you would suggest it to a couple other posts and turn it into a tour. I only did this for a year.

Q: This was 1973 to 1974?

BUTCHER: Right.

Q: Were there sort of no nos? Were you aware that you can't do this subject or that subject?

BUTCHER: I imagine there were. Clearly, you wouldn't send people who wouldn't get approved upstairs. You would send these proposals up to the seventh floor, to get a political signoff.

Q: Did you get after action reports, after they came back, about how they did?

BUTCHER: Yes, but, USIA after action reports always said that everybody did wonderfully. I don't think I ever saw a report that said somebody bombed. We also approved the Fulbright programs. I don't remember exactly how the selection program went. But, at some stage, late in the process, we got the package. I remember one nominee was doing women studies. One of her references basically wrote saying that women's studies isn't serious academic study. I guess these were confidential references, and it totally damned the whole idea of women studies. Of course, this was 1973 to 1974.

Q: Were you learning the trade, or did you feel that you were in a woman's movement, or was this subliminal? How did you find it?

BUTCHER: There wasn't much of a movement at this point. Oh, Mary Olmstead, who was one of the...

Q: I've interviewed her.

BUTCHER: She's great. She was the office director when I worked on the India desk in the summer of 1969. It was nice to see a woman as an office director, at least. Frankly, I thought that if I made office director, that was success. I wasn't shooting for an ambassadorship. I thought Mary Olmstead was great. At some point, after the Women's Action Organization was established, I went to a couple meetings, but I never became greatly active in it. When the class action suit came along and they asked for examples of women's experiences, I did send them some, including the mess about my departure from Caracas and the assignment to CU.

Q: This was in the 1970s. Gloria Steinem and Ms. Magazine were beginning to come on line. But, again, it was early days.

BUTCHER: I felt entitled to be a good officer, but in general, I guess I felt lucky. I was lucky to work for Bill Luers, that was one of the main things, both in Caracas and then in the Secretariat.

Q: How about on the Fulbright programs? Usually, there are committees in the United States and there are committees in the countries. What was your role in the Fulbright thing?

BUTCHER: The ones who were coming to the U.S., we didn't have any role in the selection process. But I think the U.S. committee gave us a group of nominees to consider for awards to go overseas... Or we were preparing a package for the committee. I frankly don't remember. It wasn't the whole range of all the applicants. We had maybe 10 candidates for four or six positions.

Q: Were there any countries that we were particularly looking at, that you can recall, or was it pretty much across the board?

BUTCHER: We had to be pretty even, in trying to give something to all the programs. I don't remember a big push in one way.

Q: Well, in 1974, wither? You were transferred where in 1974?

BUTCHER: To the line at the secretariat, S/S-S. It was Henry Kissinger's secretariat. So, I went from having my own program, a $500,000 budget that I ran, to being a very tiny minnow, in a big pond, in Henry Kissinger's Washington. It was fascinating.

Q: You were there from 1974 to?

BUTCHER: 1975. A line assignment was normally just one year.

Q: Of course, this was hard work, but a very prestigious type of thing. Did you feel that you were part of a select crew?

BUTCHER: Oh, very much so. It was great fun. As I said, I was an FSO-6, when most of the line officers were fives. I traveled to Japan, Turkey, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Poland and Romania on three different trips during that year. From that kind of assignment you get a sense of the whole building. It was a wonderful experience for any officer.

Q: As a line officer, what were you doing?

BUTCHER: Control of the paper flow, basically. You had to let the bureaus know when the secretary had a meeting coming up that required briefing materials, and what he needed for a trip or whatever. There were also action memos, decision memos, but I mostly remember the schedule items and trips. Kissinger traveled far more than any previous secretary. Of course, there's even more travel now. For a trip, you'd sit down with the bureau and figure out what the topics were and what the schedule would be for getting them together, and then you'd physically assemble the briefing books. From day to day, whatever was coming up on the schedule, you'd task whatever briefing materials the secretary would need, and be sure the input included the viewpoint of all the interested parties, which is something that drives bureaus crazy because they'd think we were picky in requiring all these clearances. Looking at it from the top, there is good reason why you have to clear it. It's making sure that all the views of all the interested parties are appropriately represented in the materials that go to the secretary. I know that a lot of times when you are down in the bowels of the department, it's frustrating if it takes you three hours to redo something, but if it will save 15 minutes of Henry Kissinger's time, it's worth three hours of your time or my time when I'm down there.

Q: Were you all running around getting clearances or was it mainly by telephone references?

BUTCHER: The drafters and bureau staff assistants had to get the clearances. We dealt with people mainly by phone, or they came to us. Usually, they were the ones who were running back and forth. Although, Jim Tarrant told my husband a tale that I don't even remember. I don't remember what Jim was doing at that point, but he was down at EUR, on some desk, and I went down to talk to him about something. It was like, "Somebody from the line actually came down to see us!" He was surprised, because that was unusual.

Q: What were the trips like? Let's talk about some of the trips you went on.

BUTCHER: The first one I went on was in, I think, November 1974, to Tokyo. Then I did one of Kissinger's Middle East shuttles, and Ford's trip to Warsaw and Bucharest after the CSCE summit. The secretary and the president went to Korea, China, Japan and Vladivostok. I stayed in Tokyo, while the party went Tokyo-Korea-Tokyo-Vladivostok-Tokyo-China-Tokyo. I was there for three weeks straight, advancing then staying in Tokyo, while another team was on the plane with the secretary. On these trips, you'd get all the cable traffic for the secretary and summarize it, and get it back and forth from wherever your communication center is, whether it's the embassy or whether they'd set up a temporary comm center in the hotel wherever the secretary was staying. On an advance team, you had to make sure they had telephones in appropriate places and the courier shuttles were set up and whole variety of things. I remember turning on the water in the guest house where Kissinger would stay in Warsaw, and having rusty water come out, and running the water until it ran clear. You had to check that everybody had a schedule. The briefing materials are generally done back in the department, but then anything that needs to get to the secretary upon arrival, you assemble it. While they are there, you are feeding information. It used to be when the secretary left town, the acting secretary really became acting secretary. I think it was around this time that it became, both by Kissinger's personality and by communications capability, it became possible for the Secretary to continue to make all the decisions, even while he was traveling.

Q: Who was your particular boss, or bosses?

BUTCHER: Bill Luers was one of the Deputy Executive Secretaries. Ron Woods was Director of the line, S/S-S. Ted Elliot was the Exec Sec? Craig Johnstone, Lionel Rosenblatt, Dick Hecklinger and Steve Worrel were on the line with me.

Q: Did the personality, management style of Kissinger, come through down at your level?

BUTCHER: Yes. He was very demanding. Part of this may have come through Jerry Bremer's style (Jerry was Kissinger's special assistant). He was very demanding, and yet I felt, justifiably so, that you knew what had to be done and when it had to be done. That was good. Al Adams was the other special assistant, then Parker Borg came in to replace Jerry. He was so much calmer than Jerry yet still effective.Q: Did you get a feeling about some of the bureaus, and the rankings? Some people produce and others do not.

BUTCHER: Some produce in a different way. NEA clearly was hard charging, very assertive, probably hard to work for, and yet I think people were glad to be working hard there. Of course, Henry Kissinger had no interest in or respect for ARA. My bureaus were EAP and EUR, both of which were fine and competent. I wouldn't call NEA the star so much as it was the more intense bureau.

Q: It was the center of attention. It always has been. There is always a crisis there.

BUTCHER: The Africa Bureau wasn't high status, but I think people sort of had a sense of respect because they ran it in their own way. The geographic bureaus were clearly higher status than the functional, except EB. But Kissinger didn't have much respect for the Department or the Foreign Service in general. Remember GLOP? (Global Outlook Program.)

Q: It was instigated by his meeting in Mexico City with ambassadors to Latin America, where he found that they really didn't have any feel, at least in his impression, about NATO and other places. He said, "Well, we have to mix these people up."

BUTCHER: I did come from doing Latin America to the line. I had EAP and EUR for bureaus, which was good. It helped to see the broader perspective of things.

Q: The European Bureau has always had the reputation of being, almost the most sophisticated. It doesn't get ruffled. Was this your impression? You are sort of shrugging.

BUTCHER: Well, I don't know. It's not like the people in the European Bureau were any better. Q: Did you get involved in any particular crisis, or problems?

BUTCHER: The Op Center basically did the task forces and that sort of thing. If there was something that was really hot, it was being sent to the task force and the Op Center, not so much up through the memos and briefing papers that we handled. This was 1974 to 1975, so the tail end of Vietnam was happening. Lionel Rosenblatt and Craig Johnstone took off and flew back to Vietnam, to get out some of the Vietnamese they had worked with when they were assigned there. So, they were very intensely and personally caring about what was going on.

Q: I knew Lionel actually in Saigon. He has done a remarkable job since. He was chastised for doing this, and then patted on the back at the same time. You shouldn't have done this, and good show, sort of.

BUTCHER: Exactly. Lionel was on the line, and Craig was working for the Deputy Secretary then. I was pulled over to be acting staff assistant in his place, in the Deputy Secretary's office, for Robert Ingersoll. It was a good experience, too. That was really the first time that I was reading the more classified, compartmentalized information.

Q: I think this probably is a good place to stop. We will pick it up next time and put at the end of the tape where we are. In 1974, you were off, or what happened?

BUTCHER: Okay, the Secretariat was 1974 to 1975. '75 to '76 I was in Polish language training.

Q: So, you took Polish, for a year?

BUTCHER: Well, for eight months. I couldn't stand anymore time sitting in a classroom.

Q: Were you in the basement at that time, or the garage?

BUTCHER: We were upstairs at FSI. I enjoy learning languages, but eight months was enough. So, I asked to go take the consular course again. I hadn't done consular work for a few years and I was going to the Consular Section in Warsaw.

Q: Your husband was going where?

BUTCHER: Economics Section.

Q: Okay. Well, I'll ask a few question about Polish training, and then we will go to Poland next time.

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Today is the 4th of May, 2000. Well, Suzanne, let's talk about Polish training. You were taking Polish training? How did you find it?

BUTCHER: I enjoyed learning languages, but even so, to be with five people in a small room in Rosslyn for months and months gets tiresome. Still, we became very good friends. You either become friends or you hate each other. Of course, these were people we were with in Poland as well. So, it was my husband and me, Jim and Andrea McGlinchey, and Jim Gagnon. We are all still good friends.

Q: Your job there was what?

BUTCHER: I did mostly non-immigrant visas, and I spent some time doing immigrant visas.

Q: You were in Poland from when to when?BUTCHER: May 1976 to the summer of 1978.

Q: Were you getting anything from your language teacher, area studies about Poland at that time?

BUTCHER: Our teacher left Poland after World War II. We certainly were getting a lot of background from her. I remember her talking about the markets, and telling stories about being in the resistance during the war. She was a fascinating older woman, but there was also a young linguist, Witek Litwinski, who had come out in 1968, I think. Anyway, it was much more recent. He would come in to the class once in a while. I loved his style of teaching. He would teach the structure of the grammar, whereas Lydia used more the traditional FSI approach, where you're supposed to pick it up by hearing it and repeating it so often, which is not my style of learning. I like to see structures of things. I loved it when Witek would come in. The contrast between the two of them was interesting, both in their teaching styles and in their experiences in Poland.

Q: When you arrived in 1976, your husband was doing what?

BUTCHER: He was in the economic section. I was supposed to do one year in the consular section, and then move to the political section for the second year. I hated doing the non-immigrant visas. It felt like the people who were good at lying were getting the visas, and the people who weren't so good at lying didn't get the visas. Chicago is the second biggest Polish city in the world. A lot of people wanted to come over and work in the U.S., and send money back to their families. Doing the immigrant visas and the divided families issues were fascinating. And adoptions. But, the fall after we arrived, I told the admin office I was pregnant and wanted leave-without-pay beginning the following summer. I had just become pregnant. He said, "Why didn't you tell us sooner?" Well, this was absolutely as early as anybody could possibly know. I told him as soon as we knew I was pregnant, because I knew they needed a lot of lead time to fill the position, with the hard language. So, I didn't get that year in the political section, but I had a wonderful year with other young moms with kids. We had a very close American and international community in those days in Communist Poland. The Poles were very friendly, but they still had to be wary of getting at all close to Americans. Dave Pozorski came out and went straight into the political section, rather than doing the visa section first, and Donna Hrinak came to the consular section.

Q: I was doing immigrant matters and visas in Yugoslavia. This was almost 10 years before. I was wondering whether you found yourself in the same position of figuring, particularly with young and not so young women, about which ones would probably get married, and which wouldn't? We are talking about non-immigrants. You are almost choosing, saying, "I think this one probably won't get married," or something like that.

BUTCHER: One thing was the K visa for fiancï¿½s was just created around that time. That was very nice, because people could get the legal visa to go over and get married, if that is what their intention was before they went.

Q: Did you get a feel for the Polish community, particularly in Chicago, but Gary, Indiana, and other places, often from affidavits, and all this?

BUTCHER: Not much.

Q: How about communism, membership and all that?

BUTCHER: It was almost that if somebody was a member of the party, then you could rely on them to not be an illegal, to come back, because that meant they had more of a stake in their role at home in Poland. Some people were ineligible for various reasons, but mostly, you were verifying party membership because you had to, but we would routinely get waivers to allow them to travel. It's not like in Venezuela, where if somebody was a communist, you turned them down. If they were a member of the Communist Party in Poland, they were a member of the establishment. Q: Did you run a check, or something? How did this work?

BUTCHER: I don't remember, frankly. We had lookout books, and we probably sent a list over to another section. It wasn't all computerized in those days. Every applicant actually came into my office and sat down for an interview!

Q: How was living in Poland at that time?

BUTCHER: It was fine for us. I wouldn't have wanted to be a Pole living in Poland at the time, but as long as we had dollars, we could shop at the antique markets and the dollar stores. And we had monthly DOD support flights out of Frankfurt that would restock the commissary. There was a diplomatic meat market where we could buy Polish hams for dollars. Hams weren't available in the regular shops. The only way Poles could get them was barter, which was how a lot of Poles got a lot of things. (End of tape)

Living in Poland. I remember things like the wonderful flea markets, and the fresh fruits and vegetables in season. The seasons didn't last long. It wasn't like now where you can get strawberries any time of year. There, when the strawberries came, they were wonderful. There were mounds of strawberries and mounds of blueberries at the markets in season. But the grocery store shelves were mostly bare. If there was a line on the street, people would get in line, then ask what the line was for. There would be long lines whenever a shipment of bananas came in to the city. And there were always lines for the great ice cream on the Old Town square, including in winter.

We traveled all over that country, up and down. The only time we were tailed is when we traveled, when we were in a city or town. You have to go quite a long way to get anywhere different from the area around Warsaw, in contrast to say, Portugal, where there were so many different things, different regions of the country, within an easy drive. The Poles were very friendly. They had a very nice relationship with Americans. I didn't have a sense that people were feeling terribly oppressed or about to burst with resentment of the government. The government did what they did, and the people carried on with their lives. In May or June 1976, the government raised prices and there were demonstrations and strikes. We were eating dinner or having coffee with Al Brainard, the political counselor, at one of the clubs for artists and writers when the government announcement was made on TV. Al said immediately that it wouldn't last two days, and he was absolutely right. The government brought the prices back down. Then there were committees pressing for the release the people who had been arrested in the demonstrations, which were some of the roots of Solidarity. But we were only there from 1976 to 1978. It was quite amazing how quickly the rise of Solidarity came after we left. Maybe I just wasn't perceptive enough to see it. I had the impression that most people were fatalistic and resigned, not demanding change.

Q: At diplomatic receptions, going around, did you have the feeling that there was much of a class of what you would call true believers, and Marxism?

BUTCHER: There was a class of people who had their jobs with the government, and played their roles, and were the establishment. Unlike with the Marxists in Venezuela, who were the true believers, we didn't get into intense ideological conversations or anything like that.

Q: One of the people I interviewed was in Poland, not sure... maybe about this time, or a little later. He said he was sure that there were at least three convinced Marxists in Poland at the time, maybe four.

BUTCHER: Yes. This was the government, and if you wanted a job, you had to sign up.

Q: Did you get any feel for the attitude toward the Soviets?

BUTCHER: Yes, certainly resentment.

Q: Everybody you met, even the higher echelons in government, has a relative in America?

BUTCHER: Yes, many, many did.

Q: Did you have your baby in Poland or go out?

BUTCHER: I went to Sweden because my brother-in-law was at the embassy in Stockholm. Most Embassy women went out to either Berlin or Frankfurt. We would get people visiting Warsaw who were coming from Moscow. They thought, "Wow, we've come to the West." We would go to Berlin and feel like we had come to the west. People from Berlin would go into West Germany and feel like they had gone to the West. We drove out to Berlin three or four times during the two years we were there, and felt like we were in a real city. I gather Warsaw is very different today from when we were there.

Q: While you and your husband were there, did you feel the hand of the Polish security people?

BUTCHER: Not intrusively. You would hear tales like somebody picked up their phone to make a call once and could hear a friend of theirs, another American, talking on the phone. We assumed the taps got crossed, so they were picking up somebody else's apartment. You knew it was there, and you always had to be conscious of what you were saying. You had to figure your house was bugged. But, they were not a problem. The only time they were noticeable would be when we would drive around the country, and as you were driving to a town you would pick up a tail. They wanted to see what you were up to. Then, you could drive on. Actually, one time we stopped and asked them directions. They were just doing their job. You had to figure some people working for you at home and at the embassy had to do their reports to the government.

Q: Who was the ambassador while you were there?

BUTCHER: Dick Davies. I should go back and say that some people who worked at the embassy were fervently pro-American, Catholic. Maybe they were the ones who were doing the most reporting, and they were just putting on an act. It seemed to me there were some people...

Q: I think this often ran true. They had to do what they had to do. Was there any aftermath, this was almost 20 years later, from the Starbuck case (the man who was an administrative officer who got into spying) about not getting compromised?

BUTCHER: I vaguely remember we must have had the security overseas briefing before we went. It was good, because it made you think about things that you might not otherwise have thought about. I don't remember it being a constant tension.

Q: In 1978, here you are with a baby, where did you go?

BUTCHER: This was after the tandem stuff had had a few years. This was open assignment at this point. When we were coming out of Venezuela, it was like a shot in the dark, and people back in Washington would decide where you were going. By 1978 it was open assignments, where you bid on specific jobs. We found 13 combinations of assignments for Larry and me that we bid on. Our first choice was university training, and that is what we got. Here we were, in Warsaw, being asked where we would like to go for grad school. We were looking for a combination of Latin American Studies for me and Economics for Larry. We thought about Chicago or Stanford. The weather decided that one. It was a wonderful year. I had been planning to go to Stanford straight out of undergrad, and went back to the same program that I would have done then. I think it was much more useful doing it after 10 years of experience. But, it sure convinced me that I am not an academic. If I'm writing something, I want it to be a memo to someone who is going to do something about something, not just a paper for a professor. But, it really was a great year.

Q: There really is, at a certain point, a divide between the government worker who can be in private business and the academic. If you are in the Foreign Service, you want to be able to say that this adds to something that somebody will do something about.

BUTCHER: Phil Habib was Ambassador in Residence at Stanford the year we were there. He was there because he had had a heart attack, so needed some quiet time, but I think it was very stressful for him to be so far from the action. There were a lot of good courses, especially one course I took at the law school on Legal Systems of Western Europe and Latin America. I loved it. The professor's name was John Merriman. He was interested in my experience and talking about the real world. Later, we'll get to my working on the Administration of Justice program. That background was very useful.

Q: While you were at Stanford, you were taking mainly Latin American Studies?

BUTCHER: Right.

Q: Were they caught up, at all, in being a proponent or involved with liberation theology?

BUTCHER: No, the big theory that I remember is the "dependentista" theory, the idea that the international elites are more connected than the people of different classes within one country, that the international elites are all one society. I remember one of the people in the program was invited to a wedding in El Salvador. She had heard that there was something going on down there, and asked whether it would be safe to go down there. This was 1978.

Q: Well, Nicaragua was really ticking then.

BUTCHER: Yes, I did a major paper on the Sandinistas and comparing Nicaragua with Venezuela and the development of ....

Q: When talking about the elites all over, was this a bad word?

BUTCHER: Yes. The idea was that the people were being oppressed. They didn't have a chance, really, because the elites' links were so interconnected, and interconnected with the first world, that the third world lower classes didn't have any latitude to improve. Earlier, when I was an undergraduate, I remember the big focus, coming out of the Alliance for Progress, was on planning, the idea that the government should have a ministry of planning that was going to plan the whole economy, and import substitution to build up your domestic industry, which turned out to be very inefficient. I remember the contrast between being taught about comparative advantage in Economics 101, and then in Political Science being taught that Import Substitution was the way to develop the economy for Latin America.

Q: I was wondering because this was the Carter administration and I think the Sandinistas had just started to take over in Nicaragua. Then, until almost the end, the Sandinistas appealed greatly to the academic world, seeing this as a good thing. Somoza's regime was obviously not something to be very excited about.

BUTCHER: My paper compared getting rid of Perez Jimenez in Venezuela with getting rid of Somoza in Nicaragua. The earthquake was the catalyst, of course, but it wasn't the underlying issue. I took a course from Richard Fagen on Chile and Cuba. He had, in fact, testified to a Congressional committee about Nicaragua. At that point, there were hardly any academics who had paid much attention to Nicaragua, and he had. I remember his last lecture in the course on Chile and Cuba. He sounded like a preacher. He was a very good speaker, certainly sympathetic with Allende and Castro.

Q: Did you find people were looking and saying, "Well, what do you think?"BUTCHER: Yes. In our group doing the masters in Latin American studies, there were maybe 10 or 12 of us, not very many. I was with the State Department, somebody else was military and somebody else from the government, I think. Other students and John Wirth, the head of the Latin American Studies program, said that they were often surprised when we weren't taking the government's line on things, and were able to look at things from different perspectives. The one person who I remember took fairly predictable lines was a Mexican student. I remember he said Mexico wouldn't make the mistakes Venezuela had and waste its oil resources.

Q: When you came out of there, did you know where you were going?

BUTCHER: We had had all those different possibilities coming out of Warsaw, but coming out of Stanford our options were much narrower. I remember it being hard to find assignments that worked at that point. We wanted to go to Chile. That would have been great. But, the person in Larry's job in Santiago extended, and we ended up going back to Washington. I was paneled to be the Nicaragua desk officer in 1979. I was talking on the phone with the office director and he was kind of saying, "Well, I'm not sure if I'm going to put you on Nicaragua or on Belize or what." That was not what I had bid ol wanted Nicaragua, because it was the hot issue at that time. I called my counselor and he agreed to switch me to the Venezuela desk. Bill Luers was ambassador then and was wanting me to do the Venezuela desk. It turned out great. If I had been a Nicaragua desk officer, I would have been just churning out papers for all the decision making that went far above the desk level. As the Venezuela desk officer, I was the expert on Venezuela in the U.S. government. It was an important enough and big enough country that when there was something that needed attention at a higher level, it got it, but most of the action was at my level.

Q: You had been there, too.

BUTCHER: And Bill was the ambassador. Bill Luers, who had been my boss in Caracas. It worked out very well.

Q: You were the desk officer from 1979 to 1981. How was Venezuela at that time? What were they doing?

BUTCHER: They were booming. When I was in Venezuela doing visas, not many Venezuelans traveled to the U.S. By 1979 to 1981, oil prices were skyrocketing, they had money, and taxi drivers were flying up to Miami to shop. The big issues, of course, were around oil. Would the price of oil stay that high, continue to increase? Was it worthwhile for Venezuela to develop its heavy oil deposits? The price would have to remain quite high to make that investment worthwhile.

Q: Where was the heavy oil? Was that also offshore?

BUTCHER: No, it was down in the plains. The lighter oil was offshore. We had many issues over the expropriation, way back, of U.S. oil properties. I remember some guys from Exxon coming in for a meeting. I was the Venezuelan desk officer, Faye Armstrong was the lawyer and Robin Raphel was from the investment office in EB. The men from Exxon walk in and here are these three women who are the State Department experts on their oil issue. It took them a little bit to realize we knew our stuff, and we had a good relationship after that. But, at the beginning, I remember them being kind of taken aback by the three of us.

Q: You were seeing a change, weren't you, in the State Department, and government too?

BUTCHER: In women?

Q: In women, yes.

BUTCHER: Yes, very much. At the middle level, there were beginning to be people like us, but not at the senior level.

Q: Well, what about the government of Venezuela at that time?

BUTCHER: I remember as a desk officer dealing much more with the economic issues, but when I served in Venezuela, I dealt more with the political issues. They had five year terms and the elections wouldn't be until 1983. Venezuela became very political during the election campaign.

Q: But, basically, what we are talking about is a democracy?

BUTCHER: Oh, very much so. It was a delight. I loved the Venezuelans and Venezuela. They had two parties, although those parties were dominated by, again, the elite. Still, I felt like it was pretty open. There certainly were people from "good" families, and all of that, but President Carlos Andres Perez didn't come from a wealthy, old family. Venezuela was kind of a shining star in Latin America at that point, and trying to play a more active role in the Caribbean, the whole Caribbean/Central America relationship with Cuba, and the problems in Central America. We were actively working with Venezuela to encourage them to play an active role, so it wouldn't just be Uncle Sam.

Q: This is the Carter period too. I assume you probably didn't feel the hand of the Human Rights Bureau on Venezuela?

BUTCHER: No. There were certainly other parts of Latin America where it was active. Bolivia, at that point... I don't remember exactly what was going on with Bolivia, but it was Phil Taylor who was the desk officer. He was an excellent guy, and I remember he and our Deputy Assistant Secretary Sam Eaton doing good work on human rights in Bolivia.This was at a time when they were trying to "flatten the pyramid" of the bureau's organization. When I first came in back in 1970, one office was just Venezuelan/Colombia, with an office director. When I was on the Venezuela desk, we had five countries with an office director. In fact, they hadn't even had deputy office directors, until the year before I came in. So there were fewer layers and the desk officers worked very closely with our DAS. I thought that worked very well. It put the desk officers in closer touch with the broader perspective. I remember writing the papers for some big trip by a U.S. official, and Sam commented that I had incorporated not just Venezuela issues, but the regional themes into the papers, like few desk officers do. So, I was working with and I knew the Caribbean and Central American issues and Human Rights as an issue in the region, although it wasn't particularly with Venezuela.

Q: Venezuela sort of sits there. I would think it was much more attuned to the Caribbean than any of the other powers, because Colombia has Panama, Central America has its own problems. Did Venezuela see itself as Caribbean?

BUTCHER: Yes, very much so. In fact, Venezuela was always kind of back and forth, between being Andean and Caribbean, because there was also the Andean Pact and trying to breathe some life into the Pact among the five Andean countries that really wasn't working very well. I don't know how well that developed as they all moved to be more democratic and get their economic systems in order. It was an ongoing issue for us in the Andean Affairs office. We would have meetings and discussions about doing free trade and all that, but it really didn't go very far. Whereas with the Caribbean, we and the Venezuelans consulted closely about our mutual interests. They appreciated that.

Q: What was your impression of the Venezuelan embassy? Were they an effective one?

BUTCHER: The Venezuelan embassy here?

Q: Yes, here.BUTCHER: Oh, okay. The embassy down there, as far as I could see, was functioning well.

Q: The reason I ask is I try to ask people who are desk officers. Some countries don't seem to know how to work the American system, and others do.

BUTCHER: Oh, yes, my last assignment was as Director for Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. The islanders guys were really struggling to learn how to be an embassy, how to be a country. For Venezuela, Perez Chiriboga was the ambassador. He was an excellent professional. I don't remember the DCM's name, but Jocelyn Henriquez de King was the political counselor. I thought she was very good, very professional.

Q: Did they know how to play Congress?

BUTCHER: I imagine they did pretty well. I think the Venezuelan Embassy people were professional. The Canadians really know how to work our Congress, of course. I saw that later in dealing with environmental issues, and my husband was on the Canada desk. For the Venezuelans, I had the impression that Jocelyn's assignment was working with the executive branch and the DCM was working the Congress. Congress was interested in energy issues then, of course, with oil prices skyrocketing.

Q: What about Cuba? There had been a time when the Cubans were trying to mess around in Venezuela. How did Venezuela see Cuba at that time?

BUTCHER: Venezuela was a democracy. We worked very closely with them and yet they did not want to be dominated by Uncle Sam. They wanted to play their own game, and they did play games. They wanted to be seen as independent and the Cubans had actually been messing around. They were trying to keep their lines open. I think they played the game well, keeping that balance, even given their history with the Cubans, their recent history with the Cubans. Every once in a while, you would have demonstrations, but nothing like in the 1960s. They tried to keep their lines open with Cuba, and yet they worked well with us on trying to promote democracy in the region.

Q: Who was the assistant secretary for ARA?

BUTCHER: Bill Bowdler. I didn't deal with him much. I did work with Sam Eaton, the Deputy Assistant Secretary, but my issues didn't need the attention of the assistant secretary or the seventh floor in most cases.

Q: What could be a typical day as a desk officer for Venezuela?

BUTCHER: On the phone a lot. A lot of interagency stuff. I think it is interesting to see, I don't know if it was the positions I was in or if what I was sensing was a real shift in the landscape. In the early years, early 1970s, the State Department did foreign policy. Ten years later, I was dealing a lot with the other agencies, particularly the Department of Energy, of course, but others, too. By the late '80s, when I was doing environmental issues in OES (the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs), I felt my job involved negotiations with U.S. agencies at least as much as negotiations with other countries.

In 1980, we were trying to get an energy research agreement with Venezuelans, primarily to work on heavy oil, but we also did an agreement on agriculture, and an agreement on health. I worked with OES and the Economic Bureau. We did an umbrella Science and Technology agreement that we hung these other agreements under in order to make the whole thing more palatable to the Venezuelans, so it didn't appear that Uncle Sam was just meddling in Venezuela's oil business. OES was run by Tom Pickering, and what a man he was! I saw that back then, even the little I had to do with him as we were developing the agreements and getting them signed. He was fantastic, warm and friendly, but also so focused, asked just the right questions, made just the right points. It was the first time I actually started working with OES. A lot of the desk work was coordinating with other agencies, and other bureaus and what they were doing, and writing briefing papers, reading the cable traffic, answering questions on the phone. Typical day was you come in and read your traffic, and go to meetings on one of those science agreements, or the expropriation problem, or the aviation agreement, or this or that. A lot of writing memos and briefing papers and answering the phone. The desk officer is the go-to person and I knew more about Venezuela at that point than anyone in the U.S. government in Washington.

Q: At that time, it was really kind of fun?

BUTCHER: Oh, I loved it. I loved it! I enjoyed my career. Twenty-nine years. When I turned 50, I knew there were other things I wanted to do with my life, but it was a wonderful career. As I was saying before, listening to NPR about the anniversary of Kent State coming in today, and that whole era when "the cops were pigs" and authority was very suspect...

Q: Did you question authority?

BUTCHER: I did question authority, but I also wanted to be part of changing the world. Working on our relationship with Venezuela, which in the broad scheme of things, as far as what was going on in the world, this was not a hot spot or a crisis. But, it felt like we were helping to promote democracy, promote an economic system that will be fair and prosperous for everybody, and do your little bit toward world peace. I loved it all, even going to cocktail parties at the Venezuelan embassy. Cocktail parties sound silly and boring, but when I would go to those parties, I knew everybody and had issues to work with everybody, and I loved it.

Q: Did you get any feeling about the American oil companies that were involved there?

BUTCHER: They actually were very adamant about getting compensation for what had been expropriated. We didn't resolve that during my watch. The companies saw heavy oil as a huge potential opportunity, and yet they were rightly wary about putting in the huge investment that would be necessary and were weighing the potential with the economic costs and political risks and were looking at the different technologies. There was always a question of how much should the government get involved in, for example on developing and demonstrating the "huff and puff" technology, which injects steam in order to get the heavy oil to come up. It's a technology for extracting which could only be used for heavy oil and would be viable only if the price of oil stayed high. Well, how much should the government be involved in doing research for the industry or paying for industry research? Those are the kinds of issues we were dealing with them on. It was very much a business opportunity for them.

Q: Were there problems with Americans in Venezuela, getting arrested, harassed, that sort of thing?

BUTCHER: There was an American circus that took its equipment down to Venezuela during what was our off season and all of their equipment was impounded. I think the government claimed they hadn't paid taxes. I remember that issue going on and on. It started out as a consular case. But then, the Economic Bureau also got involved with it as a business dispute. It really was just one of these mom and pop operations, not a big corporation.

Q: This was a circus?

BUTCHER: A merry go round and ferris wheel, and stuff like that. That was the only issue like that that I can remember getting involved in. Most of the other issues, the consular cases, were taken care of, and the desk didn't really need to be involved.

You were asking what a typical day was like. One thing I do remember was that my predecessor and my successor both worked long hours on this job. I met my car pool at 5:30, to pick up my daughter at day care. I got the work done and got promoted. I often think about all the people who work long hours yet don't accomplish as much as they should. That sort of stuck. It was a great job. It was a fun job, and it was manageable.

Q: I think some of these hours are somewhat self-generated, or you let it be known that you won't be there. Life goes on.

BUTCHER: It is true that after hours you sometimes have some useful conversations and get work done when the phone is not ringing. I saw that at other times in my career when I have been able to hang around in the evening. But the Venezuela desk showed me that I could do the job and do it well without hanging around.

Q: In 1981, you left. What was your husband doing at that time?

BUTCHER: You really ought to interview him. He was working in the Regional Economic Office in ARA, doing the Caribbean Basin Initiative to try to get aid to Central America and to get them to reform their economies. Later he was the State Department lead on establishing the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, for the Eastern Europeans after the Soviet Union fell. Then he worked on economic supports in the Middle East, trying to establish a similar bank there, ten years ago when there really did seem to be hope of bring the region together. Anyway, he has always done economic issues and seemed to get involved in trying to create economic underpinnings for areas undergoing important political change.

Q: In 1981, you went where?

BUTCHER: In 1981, I had another baby. We were going to Lisbon, with me on leave-without-pay. I was planning on working until two weeks before my due date and then taking a couple of weeks of Portuguese, but the baby came on what was to have been my last day at work. I did take Portuguese classes when I got to Portugal. It was pretty easy, because I already had Spanish.

Q: You were there from 1981 to 1983?

BUTCHER: It was a great place to live. We lived out on the coast with a wonderful, international community. We had Portuguese friends, and also a lot of Brits, Australians and Canadians. It was great. Larry had a long commute into the city, which wasn't so great. While we were there, we realized our son was handicapped. He has autism. So, that really changed our lives.

Q: Did you find yourself really removed from getting solid medical advice?

BUTCHER: We certainly felt so, but even in the U.S., back then, parents felt at a loss trying to figure out what was wrong because autism is something you can't quite put your finger on. There certainly is much more awareness now about autism, and better diagnosis. We happened to be in Spain on vacation and took Galen to the Navy base at Rota for his one year check up. I told the doctor that he wasn't speaking nearly as much as his sister was at this age. The doctor said that that was typical for a second child and not to worry about it. I will always fault him for not having asked more questions and pursued that. Not that he should have known it was autism, but he should have referred us for a more thorough evaluation.

Just a few weeks later, we were in Madrid, and Galen started having seizures. We went to the Air Force base hospital there. The first medic said, "Give him some aspirin." It was just hell. It was awful. We went back the next day and saw a doctor, who sent us downtown to a Spanish neurologist. Anyway, the whole experience was just horrible. In fact, we went back to Lisbon and found a wonderful Portuguese neurologist. Galen was continuing to have seizures. She not only dealt with the seizures but she said we were asking the right questions about his general development. At that point, we had made reservations to come back to the States. With her encouragement, we did pursue it. We went to Children's Hospital and the neurologist here said, " Oh, you can't tell anything about development until he is at least two years old." He suggested that we get the seizures under control and go on back to Portugal. So, even here, the neurologist at Children's Hospital was not pursuing it as he should have. We went out to Oklahoma and found a developmental pediatrician there who did a good assessment. She gave us some idea of what we were dealing with. I could go on forever about it. It's not that we felt that by being overseas that any damage was done. The whole thing was awful, but I think it would have been awful even if we had been here.

We got back to Portugal and put an ad in the local English-language newspaper asking if anyone wanted to work with a one-year-old with developmental problems. The speech therapist from the local American school offered to spend a half hour with him five days a week at our house. She was wonderful. And an English woman who had been an early childhood educator in England came to the house twice a week to work with him. Looking back, we were very lucky. You could be somewhere overseas and just not finding anything, and yet there are a lot of things that you can put together when you are overseas even if it is not quite as structured or routine as here. When we were in Poland, it turned out that there were five of us, four American couples and one Canadian couple, having babies in Warsaw in 1977. We found a Polish woman who was trained in Lamaze and we had our baby group in Warsaw.

Q: Also, you often end up with a closer support group, because I think people are working a little harder on the average.

BUTCHER: We did feel very much alone in Portugal. That whole network of being with moms of toddlers that I continued to be part of, and I love them all, but there was no way they could understand, and seeing the difference between Galen and their kids was so hard.

Q: Well, did you wonder about whether you could continue a career?

BUTCHER: For sure. Galen was two months old when we went to Portugal in July 1981. We came back to came back to the States for several weeks in July and August 1982 and got the seizures under control, then went back to Lisbon and stayed for another year, curtailing one year from a three-year assignment. I had already been planning on taking those years off, leave without pay, to spend time with the kids. When we came back to the States in 1983, Larry took leave without pay for the next two years. So, we had one of us at home with Galen for the first four years. The Department has been quite good. I think it may be even better now. Then, it was hard to work part-time for the Department, but they were good about letting people take a year or two of leave here or there. That worked very well for us. We were able to have one or the other of us at home with the kids for quite a number of years. I stayed home with Lauren (our older daughter) for one year in Warsaw. Then, we both were in university training. Then, the year we came back to Washington, Larry took a year.

Q: So, when you came back in 1982, I guess, toward 1983, what did you do? Your husband was taking leave without pay.

BUTCHER: We came back in 1983. I went to work for Steve Solarz on a Pearson.

Q: You did that for a year?

BUTCHER: 1983 to 1984.

Q: Steve Solarz is sort of a phenomenon.

BUTCHER: He sure is.

Q: I'm interviewing him again later this month.

BUTCHER: Oh good.

Q: It's hard to catch him. He is always in orbit somewhere.

BUTCHER: He hasn't slowed down.

Q: No, he hasn't slowed down a bit. Tell me about Steve Solarz at this time, 1983 to 1984.

BUTCHER: Talking with Foreign Service people, they usually either love him or hate him. Love him because he is very intelligent and very serious. He certainly was not traveling around the world doing sightseeing and shopping like some Congressional travelers. When he would travel, he would... I set up an 11-country trip for him around Latin America. He wanted a working breakfast and tennis and three meetings in the morning, and a working lunch, and three meetings in the afternoon, and then another tennis game, and then a cocktail, and then a working dinner. He wanted his days jammed packed, to meet as many people and as broad a range of people as he could. He was certainly arrogant, and no doubt still is. I admire him. It was a good experience. It was one of those experiences where you look back and say it is good. I wouldn't say it was fun at the time.

This was during all of the controversy about the Boland amendment, about the Congressional role in controlling U.S. actions in Central America. Steve was not one of the boys. I think he would say that and recognize that. On the Hill, I think other members of Congress found him to be somebody who couldn't shmooze easily, which made it hard to put together coalitions to get things done. We did do a resolution encouraging the "Contadora" process to try to resolve the Central American conflicts, which passed unanimously, but that was just a "Sense of the House." There were all the issues around conditions on aid to El Salvador. The Congress was micromanaging foreign policy and yet here I am, from the Executive Branch. I worked for Steve; he was my boss and that was what I was doing that year. It was interesting moving back to the department. We will talk about that when we get back to the Department. It was certainly very useful to have that experience.

It was also interesting to have information come to you when you are on the Hill. You have the lobbyists. The Human Rights and Americas Watch people were particularly good. You would get lots of information and you would have to sort through what was useful, and what is not useful, what is believable and reliable and what is not. When you are a diplomat, you are out there trying to gather information. If you are on the Hill, people are throwing information at you. You have to sort through what are your top priorities.

With the invasion of Grenada, Steve wanted an answer right then. "Okay, do we support this or don't we?" Well, gee, I would like to learn something about it first. But he wanted to be in front of the cameras right then, which I find troubling.

Q: I think everybody accepts the fact that when he arrived, it was a working tour. When he went to a place, he would absorb all the time. The question always is, "What happened to him?" Did you find, in your time, that with his wealth of knowledge, it translated very well to other members of Congress?

BUTCHER: I think they respected him as a source of knowledge. He knew a lot and other members knew that. I don't know how effective he was at getting pieces of legislation passed, or compromises made. But, he was fourth ranking on the Foreign Affairs Committee, at that point. I do think the other members respected his knowledge, but he was not a deal maker.

Q: This is during the Reagan administration. The Reagan administration had taken it upon itself to get really involved in El Salvador and Nicaragua. It was the beginning of the whole Iran-Contra thing. Did you get involved? Was Central America sort of on your plate?

BUTCHER: Thirty-six hours a day. Yes. The State Department authorization bill also came up. I did all the issues on that, giving Steve the pros and cons and what issues to vote for. That was really interesting because it covered the gamut of issues all over the world, but other than that, the main thing I did was Central America. Steve was chair of the Asia Subcommittee, so he had his subcommittee staff to do the Asia issues (including Stanley Roth, who later became Assistant Secretary when I was in EAP). I was his Foreign Affairs person in his personal staff. Well, he actually also had someone who did refugee issues, who was great. Her name was Dawn Calabia. She worked for Catholic Charities later, then UNHCR. Steve was quite involved in refugees and some of the issues with Greece and Turkey - he was pro-Turkish because he saw the strategic importance, while many other members of Congress catered to Greek constituencies - and various other issues. But, he loved what he did, and he did a lot on the Asia stuff on the subcommittee and then Central America. This was before anyone heard of the Iran connection. The Contra issue was should we fund the opposition in Nicaragua and how much? The administration was trying different ways to get funding to the Contras. The Iran connection came to light later. When I was working for Solarz, we were very involved in all the back and forth about the role of the Congress and the role of the Executive Branch in making decisions like the funding of the Contras and who speaks for the United States, and all of the issues about the conditionality on aid to El Salvador.

Q: During this period, there was an awful lot of support for the Sandinistas, and in a way, for the rebels in El Salvador, among the left, the glittery Hollywood people, the activists in the Catholic Church. Steve Solarz being a Democratic congressman from Brooklyn, I would think, would have fallen into this, but how did he fit into this? Then, you had the Reagan administration, which was saying that it would take a while, and Texas would go next, or something like that.

BUTCHER: He certainly did not agree with that. He was on the left and did not want Nicaragua to fall to the Contras. He wanted very strict conditionality, micro-managed conditionality on aid to El Salvador, in order to try to move El Salvador to get rid of the thugs in power. He was certainly on the left, but fairly sensible left.

Q: Because when you talk about thugs, you are really talking about thugs on both sides.

BUTCHER: Guerrillas are guerrillas. But the idea of the aid with conditionality was to try to help the government to be able to win over people, in some way other than death squads.

Q: Did you find yourself, as a Foreign Service officer, awkward?

BUTCHER: No. I was part of Steve's staff. We had lots of good discussions, and of course I brought my own experience and perspective. But I knew that that year I worked for Steve. I was not there as a State Department representative. That's the way the Pearson fellowships were set up, even more than the congressional fellowships, because we were in one office for the full year.

Q: When you were trying to get information, particularly about Central America, because that was sort of the focus, what were your better sources, and what were not your good sources?

BUTCHER: A lot was on human rights issues. Holly Burkhalter at Americas Watch was good. Also, some of the people from WOLA (Washington Office on Latin America), although they did more hand-flapping than Holly. I remember Holly's stuff as being very solid. But, WOLA gave a good sense of the viewpoint of that part of the interested community. One day the political DAS from ARA, who was from the Heritage Foundation, came to see me, which I thought was pretty savvI'm not sure to what extent he was trying get his views to Solarz through me (at a time when most of the people at the political level of the Executive Branch weren't communicating very well with Democrats on the Hill), or he was looking for information from me on the mood on the Hill, or plans. No doubt both. I worked closely with the staff of the Latin America subcommittee and other staffers who were interested, like Bill Woodward, who worked for Gerry Studds then and later became Madeleine Albright's speechwriter. I did call people at the Department, too, generally at the desk level. I remember calling Donna Hrinak on...

Q: Donna who?

BUTCHER: Donna Hrinak. She is the ambassador in Caracas now. She had been in Poland with us, so she was an old friend. She was on one of the Central America desks. I forget what it was, but something that I said, and she reacted to, struck me that I was speaking Congress-speak and she was coming back with Executive-Branch-speak. It struck me as an instance o"where you stand is where you sit." That is the kind of thing that makes the experience of working on the Hill as a staffer so good, not just working in H (Congressional Relations), because you begin to recognize, "Oh, I wasn't thinking of it that way." It's a whole different culture. Of course, we have to do that when we're dealing with other governments, too, to try to understand their perspective, or even working with other agencies.

Q: When Solarz came back from these trips, would he have a series of memos or something, or was it pretty much in his head?

BUTCHER: It was pretty much in his head. He was a very quick study and absorbed an enormous amount of information, but it is not like he came back and briefed the other members of the Committee. He would tell stories sometimes, but not much, and there was no formal debriefing. He loved to name drop..."When I was talking with Fidel Castro..."

Q: Would you sit behind him when he was in the Foreign Affairs Committee?

BUTCHER: At hearings, yes.

Q: What was your impression of how he handled his role in those hearings?

BUTCHER: I think he always asked good questions and knew his stuff. I think his individual meetings were more useful than the public hearings. He would posture in those public hearings like any other members do. I remember him having a meeting with the head of AID, who came down without staff. I was there with Steve, in his office. I remember we were impressed that he came alone. Steve did have a lot of one-on-one meetings where he would be able to talk with the Assistant Secretaries.

Q: In 1984, having been a traitor to your class...

BUTCHER: Then, I moved to the policy planning office in ARA.

Q: You were there from 1984 to?

BUTCHER: 1986.

Q: Now, policy planning covers a multitude of sins. It depends on who is in charge. Sometimes it is speech writing, sometimes it is looking ahead, and sometimes it is taking care of papers. What was ARA's policy planning while you were there?

BUTCHER: All of that. ARA's policy planning director was Luigi Einaudi. He was a wonderful, wonderful, principled gentleman. He was involved in both looking ahead and the crisis of the day. I remember we put together a document to be distributed by Public Affairs that was much more than the usual "GIST." It was a whole publication about moving toward democracy in Latin America. We had a map with democratic countries in one color and those that weren't in another color. Must have been at least three colors, to show shadings. Anyway, Luigi insisted that countries that were not democratic be shown as that. That was courageous at that point, because until then, as long as they were "our guys," we sort of covered over. Some of the people in the Administration I'm sure would have preferred that the map just show Cuba as non-democratic and everyone else as democratic. (Otto Reich was doing "public diplomacy" for ARA at that point, and Ollie North was at the NSC.) Luigi played an important role encouraging and analyzing the movement toward democracy throughout the region, while most of the Administration was so focused on El Salvador and Nicaragua. He used public documents and especially testimony very well to shape policy and send messages.

Q: At that time, the caudillo type was beginning to recede.

BUTCHER: Definitely. That was the point of this paper, that there was this exciting change happening. Back when I was the Venezuela desk officer, Venezuela was unusual, whereas by this period, most of the continent had moved toward democracy.

Q: What were you doing? What part of the action did you have?

BUTCHER: We used to get huge piles of all of the substantive cables from the whole region. A lot of it was trying to understand what was going on, looking for patterns. You had desk officers who were dealing with each country, while we were trying to look at the more regional forces.

Let's go back a minute to when I moved from the Hill, back to ARA. Mike Skohl was the deputy office director. I remember the first few weeks feeling that he was very suspicious of me. He got all these digs in. Finally I said, "Mike, I am a Foreign Service officer." I told him that last year, I worked for Steve Solarz, this year I work for the State Department. I would bring some perspective from that. There certainly was more tension in the move back than there had been in going to the Hill.Q: On the Hill, did they feel suspicious of you?

BUTCHER: I didn't feel that really. I was Steve Solarz' staffer and they didn't question it. Then, I came back and there was suspicion, not from Luigi, but from Mike. Luigi had been Policy Planning director for ARA for ages, through many different administrations and just brought a wealth of knowledge and perspective to any assistant secretary or administration. There were three or four Foreign Service officers, and then he brought in a couple of academics. At this time, I now know there was a lot of stuff going on that I didn't know about and didn't want to know about, which later came out as Iran-Contra.

In PPC, we would write testimonies, and we would write speeches. The office was very collaborative. Luigi encouraged that. One of the main things that I myself did was to develop the Administration of Justice program. Four churchwomen had been killed in El Salvador. People on the Hill and in human rights groups were saying, "Prosecute the murderers!" In fact, that was one of the conditions Congress put on aid to El Salvador. But El Salvador didn't begin to have the capabilities to prosecute, to find and gather evidence against perpetrators, even if the will had been there. We created this program to help, working with the Hill. The most interesting challenge was working with the different parts of the Executive Branch. At that point, AID said "Justice? No, we do agriculture. We do health. We do education. We don't touch justice." They had gotten burned with the Public Safety program, in Uruguay and elsewhere, in the 60's, where people trained by AID were implicated in human rights abuses. So AID didn't want to do justice and democracy, didn't consider it their job, but they eventually came along and they do a lot now.

We had strong support from Luigi and Jim Michel, who was in L (Legal) and then became principal DAS in ARA. Faye Armstrong from L worked on it with me. She moved to PPC after I left. I think she's still there. Faye and I worked with a "Kris" Kristoff at the Department of Justice. We had a mandate from Congress to do this. But, trying to figure out how you are actually going to create a program...Q: What was the idea? What were you going to do?

BUTCHER: To increase or create a capacity in these governments to prosecute and try in some sort of legal, appropriate way, the perpetrators of crimes, to improve the judicial system. The specific goal was to be able to prosecute crimes such as the murders of the churchwomen. They had judges who didn't even have a copy of the code that they were supposed to be administering.

Q: Was it just poverty or was it that it wasn't the structure?

BUTCHER: There wasn't the structure. There wasn't the will. There wasn't evidence gathering. This was all sort of new.

Q: I'm not surprised.

BUTCHER: They learned what they learned in law school and then went off and sort of winged it, it seems.

Q: I don't know the system, but I would think that in Europe where much of the Spanish system...

BUTCHER: That is where that course from Stanford came in handy about the European and Latin American legal systems.

Q: Basically, you have an awful lot of power in the investigative magistrate. It's been used to affinity while in Europe. It has taken a while for them to really get going, but now they are all over the place.

BUTCHER: Poor staffing and poor salaries. There was too much case work and not enough people, not enough materials or training. So, we worked with AID and the Department of Justice and established ICITAP (I don't even remember what it stands for). We established training programs, on evidence collection, body fluids and stuff like that, safeguarding of evidence, witness protection, basic judicial libraries. So, when the legislature made changes in the codes, the judicial system would have some reference to be able to know what the current law was and not the law when they went to law school 20 years ago. Costa Rica had quite a good system, so they established ICITAP there to bring people for training. We traveled to Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Panama and Honduras to establish the program. We didn't just want to make this a program for El Salvador; we wanted to improve the capabilities throughout the region. It's really gratifying to see that this many years later, the program is alive and well in many parts of the world. Of course, these are difficult issues, but in many parts of the world, we do have the capability now to assist judicial systems.

Q: It was a specific case that triggered this, and so you were centered more on Central America.

BUTCHER: And the Dominican Republic. We began some work in Peru that I think expanded after I left, but it started with Central America.

Q: At that time, do you recall, what sort of system did Venezuela have? Did they have the same problems?

BUTCHER: They didn't have a government that was trying to protect death squads.

Q: I see. Well, you didn't have the situation.

BUTCHER: It was certainly the same code. I remember looking into it when I was there in the early '70s. They were thinking about whether to prosecute Perez Jimenez, the former dictator. It was the same legal system, based on the Napoleonic Code, but it was a better-funded, wealthier country. In El Salvador, there was certainly a question of whether there was a will to prosecute. But we were trying to take away the excuse that they didn't have the capability to prosecute.

Q: Did the Human Rights Bureau enter into this at all, or were we doing this in ARA?

BUTCHER: At that point, it was pretty much an ARA thing. It was ARA, L, AID and Department of Justice. At the same time, AID was beginning to do democracy programs. Democracy and justice were coming along together.

Q: Did you feel that you were off doing this while ARA was doing something... You could do this because nobody else was paying attention to it?

BUTCHER: Yes. It felt like we were doing something constructive, positive, and we had the Congressional mandate to do it. If we hadn't had that, it wouldn't have happened. There was certainly other stuff going on, Otto Reich trying to promote public and Congressional support for the contras in Nicaraguthey called them the "freedom fighters", and a lot going on behind the scenes.

Q: Did this pretty much occupy your time, in this 1984 to 1986 time? A very worthwhile project then?

BUTCHER: Yes.

Q: What happened with the churchwomen? They had a trial, didn't they?

BUTCHER: They eventually had a trial, and they convicted the actual perpetrators, but not the higher-ups. I think the highest-ranking person convicted was a lieutenant.

Q: 1986, wither?

BUTCHER: In 1986, to OES.

Q: OES, meaning?

BUTCHER: The Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. Deputy Director of one of the two environment offices. I think it was called the Office of Environmental Policy, but the division was really that our office focused on issues like clean air and toxic chemicals, while the other office did endangered species and forestwe called ours "sludge and drudge" and the other one "fur and feathers."

Up to that point in my career, I think I was always about the youngest person whatever I was doing. I was young and I was junior. I came into the Foreign Service at 21. I went to the Secretariat as an FSO-6, when everybody else was a Five. I came to the Venezuela desk as an O-5, when most desk officers were a Four, or whatever the numbers were at that pointhey changed the numbering system somewhere along the way. I got promoted. Then, going into OES to be a Deputy Office Director. I had bid on it and Richard Benedick was the Deputy Assistant Secretary. Personnel wouldn't panel the assignment because it was a "stretch" the job rank was higher than my rank. OES held out and I held out. In the end, I got the assignment. It was great.

Q: You did it from 1986 to?

BUTCHER: 1989. I extended for a year.

Q: Why was OES after you? What was the connection?

BUTCHER: Nothing in particular. I couldn't figure it out myself at the time. I wanted the job because it was a Deputy Director job, I enjoyed working with OES when I was on the Venezuela desk, and I wanted to work on the environment. I guess they were glad to have an officer who had been promoted quickly, who had worked on the Hill. Looking back, I realize that they probably didn't have a lot of FSOs bidding on their jobs. But, I didn't realize it at that time. OES wasn't seen as a career enhancer. But it was a wonderful job.

This was right at the time that we were beginning the negotiations on the Montreal Protocol on the Ozone Layer. I was working inter-agency with at least a dozen different agencies on an issue that the time was ripe for. In 1985, they had negotiated the Vienna Convention on the Ozone Layer, which I think had been fairly frustrating. It wasn't mature as far as the politics, the industry, or the science. They ended up with a framework convention with no teeth to it. When I came in, in 1986, the Natural Resources Defense Council had sued EPA for not implementing the ozone layer provisions of the Clean Air Act sufficiently. That fed into what we were trying to do internationally.

EPA held two workshops that summer, one on the economics and one on the science, that brought together people from all the key groups and countries. When they were trying to negotiate the Convention, they realized that people were coming from such different perspectives, with such a different knowledge base. They had the workshops to try to exchange information and increase people's understanding of what they were dealing with, trying to figure out what would be the impact on industry, for example. I remember the first workshop I went to. I was sitting at a table with a guy from the air conditioning industry, and he said, "If you control CFCs, you're going to put Houston out of business." At that point, people just couldn't imagine running the economy without chlorofluorocarbons.

The science workshop was also trying to bring people together. You had people making assertions and other people just dismissing those assertions, and not having a base of common knowledge from which to negotiate actual provisions that would protect the ozone layer. So, we had those two workshops. I came in just as they were doing them. The timing was wonderful, because the workshops educated me. I remember when I first came in, Richard Benedick, my Deputy Assistant Secretary, said, "Do a memo to the Assistant Secretary, laying out the NRDC lawsuit and what EPA is doing and what is happening internationally." John Negroponte was the Assistant Secretary in OES then. Pulling that together certainly educated me. How to fit domestic regulatory action with international negotiations, with economic impact, with scientific knowledge that is developing as you are moving along? It was fascinating.

Three jobs... I went from establishing the Administration of Justice program, to protecting the ozone layer, to establishing peacekeeping operations at a time when there was great optimism about the UN. That period in my career really made me feel like I was doing something worthwhile.

Q: Well, the situation with the ozone layer had really just surfaced as far as public knowledge?

BUTCHER: Two scientists, Sherry Rowland and Mario Molina, were doing some calculations back in 1974 and realized what happens with CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons) when they get up to the stratosphere and react with the ozone. They said, "Oh, my God," when they figured out that it would deplete the ozone. So, it wasn't a matter of having measured an ozone hole or anything, it was these scientists in a lab who figured out the theory of what must be happening. That lead to a very strong provision in the Clean Air Act, in 1978, for EPA to regulate any substance that "may reasonably be anticipated" to affect the ozone layer. At that time, Dupont and others said, "Well, we are not convinced of the science, but if the science were ever shown to be valid, then we will take action." EPA banned the use of CFCs in aerosols, but nothing more. So by the mid-'80's, the industry had shelved its research program to try to figure out alternatives to CFCs. They shifted their resources out of that research when the Reagan administration came in and they didn't think more regulation was imminent. The Reagan administration was anti-regulation and not interested in environmental issues. That was the atmosphere in the lead-up to the negotiations on the Convention in 1985. I'm sure that the negotiations and the Convention were hardly in the newspaper.

Then, that same year, in 1985, the ozone hole over Antarctica was discovered. Somebody went back and looked at the data over several years from the British station in Antarctica. It wasn't neit had grown over many yearbut nobody realized it until they went back over the data. There began to be more public awareness of the issue and concern about the issue. The science was becoming clearer. The observations were becoming clearer. When they did the Vienna Convention, they established that they would reconvene in 1986 to negotiate a protocol. So, it all came together in 1986-87.

We began the negotiations in Geneva under the U.N. Environment Program, working with EPA's international office and air office. Lee Thomas was the administrator of EPA. He was terrific, as far as understanding the content of the issues and, I think, dealing with it in the administration. I remember going to the Department of Commerce and trying to get them to analyze what sectors of the U.S. economy were going to be impacted if we controlled chlorofluorocarbons. USTR was very much involved. In the Clean Air Act, it specifically said that State had the lead on these negotiations, not USTR, not Commerce. Yet the State Department's Economic Bureau did not want to get involved. It was frustrating. To them, this was some fluffy green environmental issue. They were dealing with issues like pasta with the EU and chasing after USTR on things that USTR had the lead on. Here was an issue that State had the lead on and they didn't want to put any staff time into it. So, we worked with USTR and Commerce. Bob Reinstein was at USTR and J.R. Spradley was at Commerce. J.R. was very much in the Reagan government mold. Commerce didn't want regulations, they didn't want controls, didn't want to do anything to upset industry. But, at least he engaged on the issue.

So, we worked with USTR and Commerce on trying to figure out the impact on industry. How do you structure controls in a way that will achieve the environmental goal with the best economic efficiency? Are there essential uses that should be allowed to use CFCs? There were a lot of difficult issues. If you just had some countries controlling and others not, how do you structure all that? Very often, you will see references that look back to the Montreal Protocol as the precedent for international environmental agreements, but it was all new when we were doing it. I think we laid a really good foundation. Jim Losey was the guy in...

Q: Who?

BUTCHER: Jim Losey. He was in the international office of EPA. He was my counterpart in EPA, a key player in the whole process. (He even got permission from Stanford to arrive late to begin law school so that he could be at the final negotiations in Montreal.) You had good guys over in the air office at EPA, Steve Seidel and John Hoffman, and Linda Fisher, their assistant administrator for toxics. Bill Long was a Foreign Service officer who was on loan to EPA's international office. There were lots of good people to work with at EPA but also a lot of rivalry between State and EPA, too.

Q: Was the United States taking a lead in all of this?

BUTCHER: Yes, and that is part of what felt good. The United States was taking the lead and the EU was foot-dragging, which is something that has changed in the years since then. There was a reluctance to accept the science and to restrain their industry. But, you had to deal with every country in the world on this. You have all of the issues of the developing countries, the developed countries, the same issues that they are dealing with on the climate issue right now. We designed the whole system: Are you going to control production or consumption of the chemical? We created a system that controls both production and consumption, so it would be most efficient and effective and neither the producers nor the consumers would bear all the costs. Then there was the question of how to avoid free riders, so a country wouldn't gain advantage by not signing on. This all got into whether it was consistent with GATT (the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). Can we put provisions in here that block imports of the chemicals from countries that don't sign onto this agreement? What about imports of goods containing these chemicals? Can you block imports of goods that were made with, but do not contain, the chemical?

Q: Here you are working on this, where did you feel Secretary of State Schultz was on this, and where did you feel the Reagan administration was on this?

BUTCHER: The Secretary was supportive. This was not something he was engaged with very much, but when we needed him, he was there. He was so good in so many ways. This was the era of Ronald Reagan. Don Hodel was the Secretary of Interior. He said, "If people have a problem with ultraviolet radiation, they should wear sun hats and sun block. No, we don't want any international regulation." He certainly got more public attention than Lee Thomas.

It was a very hot issue. I really wish I had kept a scrapbook of all of the cartoons, especially, and editorials and letters to the editor. Hodel and others in the Domestic Policy Council became very involved against any regulation. Again, you have the interface between domestic regulation and international. God bless Lee Thomas. Richard Benedick, my DAS, was the lead negotiator. He wrote a good book after this, Ozone Diplomacy, where he lays out the whole history. There was certainly some back and forth about who got credit for what, between Richard Benedick and Lee Thomas, but you needed them both.

Q: Lee Thomas was?

BUTCHER: Administrator of EPA. He was instrumental. He decided early on that the U.S. should propose a 95% cut in production of these chemicals. For him to be able to sell that, or get by with that, in the Administration that he was part of, was amazing. But, what was so good about it was that in response, the industry geared up their research program again to look for alternatives. Up until then, they didn't believe there would be meaningful limits anytime soon.Working with the industry and environmental groups during this period was just fascinating. We worked with Joe - can't remember his last name - from the environmental office of DuPont. Schneider, maybe? He was excellent. He strongly represented his company's position, but he was somebody you could talk to and work through issues with, so he had real influence on how we designed the protocol. I remember one of his main points was "Don't regulate like slicing salami. Don't regulate a little bit and then a little bit more, and then a little bit more. We need predictability in order to be able to make the investments that we need to make." So we worked for a long-term agreement with reductions over many years instead of just agreeing on a first stage. Kevin Fay, on the other hand, from the industry Alliance for Responsible CFC Policy, adamantly represented their head-in-the-sand position.

Dan Dudek from the Environmental Defense Fund was excellent at looking at the economics; how do you create a system that is going to get you where you want to get in a way that works with the economy? The other main environmental group that we worked with was the Natural Resources Defense Council - they were the ones who had sued EPA. This was unusual, new, to actually have meetings with these people, to be talking with environmental groups as well as industry. We included them on delegations, along with congressional staffers. This was groundbreaking, at that point. NGOs (non-governmental organizations) were just getting established as players in international negotiations.

Once we put out our proposal to the world, to cut production of CFCs by 95%, the industry began to look seriously at alternatives again. In the end, the agreement that we signed required a 50% cut in production over twelve years, which was enough that industry knew it was worthwhile to make the investments in alternatives. We included in the agreement, though, a reassessment process to review every four years, to look at the science and adjust the percentages. Within a very few years after I moved on, as the science became even clearer, they established a schedule to phase out chlorofluorocarbons just about completely, but by then industry had developed alternatives. The process still continues. They're looking at other chemicals now, too.

Chlorofluorocarbons were the big one we dealt with, but also halons. Halons are even more ozone-depleting, but they are used in smaller quantities. They were difficult because they are used in fire suppression. We certainly knew early on that you just couldn't be using halons willy-nilly for fire suppression anywhere, but what about those very valuable uses, in airplanes, in submarines, to protect art collections and museums, where if you just turn on sprinklers you ruin irreplaceable items? The halon is just sitting there doing no harm, unless there is a fire. When it is used, it puts the fire out without damaging anything but then it goes up into the atmosphere and dissipates the ozone.

There were so many issues balancing different interests, long-term and short-term, and how do you value these different interests. When we would have interagency meetings, I think we had 17 different agencies there. This was the era when the Reagan administration talked a lot about reducing government, reducing "bureaucracy." Well, I tell you, they sure didn't cut back the endless involvement by a lot of people in meetings where they didn't really have a clear interest. The Department of Interior was ridiculously involved. They dragged out meetings and held up clearances without ever making clear what their interest in this was, other than political. DOD was involved to an appropriate extent, because they use many of the chemicals for critical needs. I spent a lot of hours trying to get clearances from Interior and Commerce on positions and papers. Commerce clearly had an interest. I was encouraging them to be involved. But with Interior it was just ideological. Don Hodel, who was the Secretary of Interior, was very anti-regulation of any sort. Between Don Hodel and the Domestic Policy people at the White House, Gary Bauer and all, it was really interesting.

Q: But, you are showing that in matters of foreign policy, some of the greatest major negotiations are done domestically...

BUTCHER: Exactly. You hear me going on and on about the negotiations in Washington. It is partly because that was my role. But, I also was writing and negotiating clearances on the cables instructing the embassies to go in and pitch our positions to other governments. I remember when we did the cable proposing the 95% cut. Richard Benedick called it the Halloween cable, because he wanted it out by the end of October, 1986. This was for the negotiations that were starting in December, which was excellent. He was good, even though a lot of people found him difficult. He wanted our position out, not the night before the negotiations started, but early enough that the embassies and the foreign governments could work the issue. Negotiating getting that cable out was difficult, but we did it. This is what it was all about. Back here, dealing with all the different U.S. government agencies plus industry, plus the environmental groups, plus the scientists.

Bob Watson at NASA and Dan Albritton at NOAA were excellent scientists, and were excellent at making the science clear to people like me who are not scientists, the White House, the public, the Congress. Dealing with the Congress was another big part of the negotiations in Washington before we could negotiate with other countries. The main Congressional committees were very supportive at that point and wanted to be on the delegations, and wanted to be telling us what to do. On science, Bob and Dan played a really important role, for example in that workshop that we had done in the summer on science. They were working with scientists around the world to try to bring a common understanding of the science to the negotiators, who were getting very mixed messages. They also did an excellent presentation to the Domestic Policy Council people, who were resistant ideologically but needed to understand the science.

Q: Did you have a feeling that since there was "rent an expert," there was also "rent a scientist?" I mean, if you wanted to show that smoking is good for your health, you can get scientists to do that, or what was your impression of the scientific community?

BUTCHER: The Chemical Manufacturers Association was actually funding some of the research in Antarctica. They kept trying to show that there wasn't a problem, but the science kept getting worse for them. Bob Watson and Dan Albritton were so good at presenting their reports, with this incredible network of scientists.

Later on, in 1988 or 1989, we also established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which issues a report every four years on the state of climate science. Climate, at this point, was the other big issue that was out there, but wasn't anywhere near being ripe to do anything about. We would have some people saying, "This is a huge problem," and other people saying it's not a problem. So, what we did was to establish the IPCC, and again, the most difficult part was negotiating within the U.S. government to get agreement even to establish an international scientific process to get the scientists to reach some consensus on what the science says. It was a huge negotiation within the U.S. government. I wrote, negotiated, and got cleared, the cable proposing the IPCC. Every once in a while, when you see reports in the newspaper about what the international scientific community is saying about climate change, it is that process that we got started during this time. By the Summit on Sustainable Development in Rio in 1992 and even by Kyoto, it still wasn't ripe for the U.S. government to get serious about doing what we should be doing about it. We are on climate now about where ozone was in 1985, at the Vienna convention on the ozone layer, recognizing that it's a big issue but not ready to do something effective about it. A lot of people now who are dealing with climate would say, "Oh, ozone was easy." Ozone was not easy at the time. At the time we did ozone, it was incredibly groundbreaking, new. No other agreement was anywhere near as complex, as far as putting together important environmental issues, and economic issues, and scientific issues, and setting up a process for dealing with them over the long term. Climate is even more difficult, even more complicated. I have confidence it will get there, just as the ozone did.

Q: I realize you were working on the domestic side, which was as complicated as you can get, but yet the negotiations went on. Were there some countries that just weren't going to play the game?

BUTCHER: Yes, definitely. The ones that were with us or ahead of us were the Scandinavians, the Canadians, the Australians, the New Zealanders, the Swiss and the Austrians. The Danes were in a very awkward position because they were part of the EU, and yet their heart was really with the Scandinavians. I don't know how we got as far as we did, actually, given where everybody was starting. But, more and more science kept coming out while we were doing this. It became clearer that we had to do something.

The EU was really difficult. Part of it was structural. They were feeling their way as to what was national competence and what was Community competence. Part was their industry, especially ICI, which was really resistanmade me appreciate DuPont. But a big part was that they would negotiate a lowest-common denominator position among themselves and then couldn't budge.

Japan played an important role, not as resistant as the EU, but very closely tied to their industry. I think they saw the potential for industry developing alternatives.

In the final negotiations in 1987, the Russians were adamant that the baseline for percentage reductions of production had to be 1990. We were trying to use a prior baseline, not a future baseline, so there wouldn't be an incentive to increase production up to the baseline date. The Russians were absolutely obstinate. In general, you could talk to them, but then they were so hung up on when the baseline was going to be. Finally, Richard Benedick, late one night, found out what their problem was. They had in their five-year plan, a certain factory that was going to be built. They were blocking this whole international agreement over when that baseline would be, trying to put the baseline after the factory was in production. So we set the baseline date in 1987 but put a provision in the Protocol allowing a country to add to its baseline any production that was contracted for and provided for in national legislation before the baseline date. Sure, it would have been better if the plant hadn't been built. You do what you have to, to get the greater good, which was the overall agreement. It would have been better not only for the ozone layer but also for the Russian economy if they hadn't made that investment in that CFC plant, because as the science went on, you could see that CFC would be totally banned.

One of the big issues right at the end, both within the U.S. government and internationally, was what triggers the agreement going into effect? How many countries have to sign on? You can't just have a number of countries. It had to be so many countries representing "X" amount of world production, and what is that going to be - 50%? 80%? At the last minute, when we were in final negotiations in Montreal, the right-wingers in the Administration, Hodel and all, tried to block the agreement by insisting on high percentage.

Q: I think this might be a good place to stop. We will pick this up next time.

BUTCHER: Can I mention the third world countries? This was not on their radar screen. China was not very involved in the negotiations until right toward the end, when they realized that this was really going to happen. We put into the agreement a provision that gave the developing countries a 10-year grace period. Working with them at the last minute, we were trying to catch up. Now, on climate, they are very involved, every step of the way. Whereas on ozone, India, China, and the other developing countries did not get very involved until late in the game. Once we passed the agreement, we went to China to talk with them about it. They became more involved. Again, this was another way in which this agreement was groundbreaking. Bringing the developing countries together on environmental issue that is going to impact their economies was difficult.

As far as the U.S. goes, Ronald Reagan had had skin cancer. If Ronald Reagan hadn't had skin cancer, I don't know what we would have ended up with. He came down, when it went for the final decision, in support, despite Don Hodell and everybody else. Thank goodness for Lee Thomas and George Shultz. I still think that they had a lot to do with it.Q: It was skin cancer on his nose, I think.

BUTCHER: Exactly. I don't know if he would have come down in favor of the agreement if it weren't for that.

Q: Okay, so we will pick this up in 1989, when you went where?

BUTCHER: I took a year off, from 1989 to 1990, a year of leave without pay, to be with my kids. We were still dealing with my son's autism, and I also wanted time with my daughter, who was 12. The department, on the whole, was very good about it.

Q: So, we will pick it up at that point.

BUTCHER: Good.

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Q: Today is the 23rd of May 2000. So, you were on leave without pay from 1989 to 1990. Then, you went to IO (International Organizations).

BUTCHER: IO/UNP, United Nations Political Affairs.

Q: You were doing that from 1990 to?

BUTCHER: 1990 to 1991.

Q: Could you talk a little about IO, at that time?

BUTCHER: John Bolton was the assistant secretary. John Wolf was the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Molly Williamson was the office director, and Will Imbrie and I were her deputy directors. We divided up the world. I had Europe. At that time, there were no peacekeeping operations in Europe. What we did with Europe basically was consult. The accounts that I was mainly concerned with were Latin America and Africa. Will had the Middle East and Asia. There was a fair amount of optimism about the UN and peacekeeping. We were setting up peacekeeping missions in El Salvador, Angola, and Western Sahara. These were the three big ones in my regions. I was just there a year, but it felt like those were well on their way. Of course, the Gulf War happened in the middle of all of this, and we all worked on that. Will did a lot of work with PM and DOD. I think that was a really important shift. I think in peacekeeping operations, the State Department hadn't really worked that closely with PM and DOD until the Gulf War. Americans generally didn't participate. We negotiated the setup and paid a lot of the bills, and Canadians and Fijians and others did the peacekeeping.

Tom Pickering was our Ambassador in New York. He and his Deputy Alec Watson had their own lines to ARA and the Embassy in San Salvador. I had good ties with ARA, but there was always that tension of what IO's role was, trying to negotiate the agreement and the peacekeeping mission in El Salvador. There was tension between John Bolton and Pickering, too, with Bolton not wanting Pickering to get credit for anything. This was when Jim Baker was Secretary.

Q: What was the peacekeeping mission in El Salvador? How was it constituted?

BUTCHER: Well, basically, after the civil war, there was an agreement that included elections and disarmament. The UN role was observing this, mainly giving people confidence, which is what the traditional role of peacekeeping missions had been. It was very difficult to negotiate Angola. We tried to figure out how we could have verification teams go out with a UN person and one person from each side, so that they could begin to build some trust and some confidence after so many years of war. Angola was a very big challenge. There was no trust at all, no give. In El Salvador, I think they did negotiate a real peace. Of course, I'm looking at this now with hindsight. At the time, of course, the negotiations were very difficult. But it worked. In Angola, it seemed like a huge, daunting challenge, whereas in El Salvador, it was smaller and doable. Still, we thought we could do Angola, with what was then considered to be a large peacekeeping mission, and the three-person teams and all.

In Western Sahara, it was a matter of trying to set up a referendum on independence. Their last census had been 17 years before, or so. We figured you had to have that referendum by a certain date, when anyone born after that date would turn 18 and be eligible to vote. It didn't seem all that complicated. We had had a referendum that had been very successful in Namibia, and thought we could do something similar in Western Sahara. But here we are, how many years later, and they still haven't had their referendum in Western Sahara. One of the big issues was whether U.S. troops would participate in the peacekeeping operation. But it never got off the ground.

Q: Was this the issue between Morocco and sort of the outpost areas?

BUTCHER: Yes, exactly. When I left IO, it felt like these three - El Salvador, Angola, and Western Sahara - were quite on track. Cambodia, on the other hand, seemed at that time to be an impossible, much too large a task for the UN to take on. Well, I went on my next assignment and came back and found we had done Cambodia quite well, Angola had totally fallen apart, and they still hadn't had a referendum in Western Sahara.

In 1990-91, we were optimistic about peacekeeping and the UN's role. One thing I do remember though is that I did a memo to the Undersecretary called "The Cost of Success." Okay, we are moving along here, successfully negotiating all these peacekeeping missions, how are we going to pay for all of this? I remember the memo said the missions that we had in mind were going to cost something like $250 million. That was a lot. Within a few years, by the time I was in S/P, the budget was about $2 billion, which was just enormous.

Q: Were you feeling the heavy hand of the Senate, particularly Senator Helms, at that time?

BUTCHER: We were in Canada in 1991 to 1993, then I was in S/P 1993 to 1996, doing UN and environmental issues. I'm having a hard time keeping it straight, what was when.

Q: Yes, let's keep to this 1990 to 1991.

BUTCHER: When I came back, it was very much the heavy hand of the Congress, whereas in the 1990 to 1991, not so much. There was much more optimism. Congress was more supportive at that point.

Q: What were you getting from... In Angola, for example, were both sides being somewhat reasonable?

BUTCHER: Well, Jonas Savimbi came to visit, and a group of us met with him. Of course, the United States was basically supportive of him and UNITA, at that point. I'm not an Africanist. I don't have experience. I can read Latin Americans, better than Africans, no doubt, because I lived there and know people more. But, it's seemed very much that he just wanted power.

Q: In the Western Sahara, at one point, anyway, in American politics, the Polisario had a rather strong support group, particularly in Congressional staff, but this was quite a bit earlier on. Was this just not around?

BUTCHER: I don't remember that. I do remember the feeling that Savimbi felt like he could get what he wanted out of Uncle Sam by going to Congress, but I don't remember Polisario having...

Q: I think they may have at one point. These things come and they go. What was the role of our embassies, from your perspective? Were they reporting in? Were we working with them?

BUTCHER: We worked with the embassies in our regions, lining up support for the Gulf War and for various resolutions at the UN, especially with the Security Council members but also for the General Assembly. Jim Baker was a master at going around in person to get support for the Gulf War. The embassies played a role in all that, but there was also...

Q: Was there a feeling on your part that you had a very solid Secretary of State who knew what he was doing, and was working on the particular area you were concerned about?

BUTCHER: It was a tight circle. I don't think he knew how to use the State Department very well. Everybody always points to George Shultz - he knew how to use the resources available in the Department. I had the impression that Jim Baker was a good negotiator. It was a different type of experience, not foreign affairs so much as business and politics, but he applied those talents well on the issues he was personally engaged in.

Q: Again, I'm trying to get, from your perspective... Tom Pickering, of course, was in almost every position you can think of, and did it very well. Was he kind of running the show, from your perspective or was IO playing much of a role in this?

BUTCHER: There is always a tension between USUN (the mission in New York) and IO. I was deputy office director. The main way that I got involved in any of that was trying to be sure that we were in the loop on El Salvador. Pickering and Alec Watson were very directly involved in those negotiations, directly with ARA and the Embassy in San Salvador. Pete Romero was the office director of CEN. Pete's great. We had sometimes heated exchanges, but it was good. Having had experience in ARA, and being seen by ARA as being an ARA hand, I think helped. Otherwise, I think ARA saw IO as a player to be avoided as much as possible.

Q: Were we scrambling to find troops to put into El Salvador?

BUTCHER: I don't remember it being so hard in 90-91 to find peacekeepers. The total numbers were so much smaller than just a few years later. We didn't put our own troops into El Salvador. I think we did end up offering to send a few people to Western Sahara. The idea of putting U.S. troops into peacekeeping missions was unusual at that point.

Q: You had European Affairs. Did Yugoslavia raise its head at all?

BUTCHER: Not at all. This was 1990-91. The only thing with the Europeans was working with them on these other issues, on Cambodia, and the Middle East, on Africa, and on UN arms control issues, which I also covered.

Q: How about Canada? Canada seems to get involved in things? How did you find them?

BUTCHER: Canada was very much involved. At that point, I think I just saw them as one of the noble countries that provided peacekeepers. From IO, I didn't talk to the Washington embassies or anything like that. That sort of consultation went on in New York. My next assignment was to Vancouver, then I came back to Policy Planning and we were very much involved with discussions with the Canadians on peacekeeping, not just on individual missions but the structure and principles and all.

Q: Then, your next job was Vancouver. Is that right? That would be from 1991 to when?

BUTCHER: 1993. Q: What were you doing there?

BUTCHER: I was Deputy Principal Officer. I took a down-stretch to take that job. For the first many years, I was always the youngest of everything, because I came in when I was 21 and moved up quickly. In this period, of course, I was dealing with all the issues with my son, so I took a job that was lower than my grade in order to get the place we wanted. The department was being very good about letting us stay in Washington. When we first came back from Portugal in 1983, I was feeling trapped in Washington, by my son's disability. Then, for a while, I became quite settled here, and thought this was fine. But, then, I got the old Foreign Service itch, to go out again. There weren't many places we could go.

Q: To capture the time, what do you need for an autistic child, when he is going to a place?

BUTCHER: I could talk hours and hours. When we were in Portugal, there was no program, or anything. We were very lucky to find some individuals who worked with him. Some people have put together programs here and there for home schooling, that sort of thing. DOD and a handful of embassies were beginning to provide services for learning disabilities, but autism is way beyond that. We went to visit Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto, and talked with people in London. It's a huge challenge. We were very lucky to be able to go to Vancouver. Their support program and their schooling were just as good as we had here. Different in some ways, but just as good.

Q: So, this is obviously a prerequisite before you can go somewhere.

BUTCHER: Yes.

Q: In Vancouver, who was the Consul General while you were there?

BUTCHER: Dave Johnson.

Q: How did he operate? How did he use the deputy?

BUTCHER: The relationship was fine. For somebody who is your boss, who is the same rank, and younger, it could have been awkward, but it wasn't. He was very good. He was fine, but the job itself wasn't. It was supposed to be an economic job, but also supervising the administrative staff. I had absolutely no administrative experience, or training. Before I went, I was asking, "Can I get some kind of training?" I was also going to be the post security officer, and they did a one or two week introductory training. It doesn't make you a security officer, but at least it lets you know what you need to keep an eye out for and what to ask questions about. The regional security officer from Ottawa was wonderfully supportive. He came out once a quarter. I could pick up the phone anytime. That whole operation worked just right, the way it should.

On the administrative side, it was awful. They taught you how to do the cash count, but beyond that, there was no training. You would have to take the whole six-month-long course for admin officers or you would get nothing. You could take pieces of the course, but they only covered very specific, narrow areas, not a good overview like the security course. I found it terribly frustrating, frankly.

When I got there, the consulate had just moved. We had a conference room with no furniture in iwe had staff meetings with everyone standing up or sitting on the floor. They had put gorgeous, very expensive furniture in the Consul General's office and mine, while the furniture downstairs for the consular and administrative staff was old and shabby. There apparently had been a problem between FBO and EUR as to who was going to pay for what during the move, and they ended up not having enough money. Anyway, the whole administrative side of things was very unpleasant.

The Admin people in Ottawa were not at all helpful, until one person in my second year, when they got a new General Services Officer. I had to beg and plead to be able to stop in Ottawa before I went to Vancouver, to at least meet the people at the embassy and try to get briefings. The Admin Counselor basically sent me to find out about my own personal allowances. That's not what I came to Ottawa for - I wanted to know what I was supposed to be doing as post admin officer. I didn't even know what questions to ask. Anywhere you are giving someone the responsibility, you ought to give them the training or at least briefings and backup. That doesn't mean six months of detailed training, it means just a couple weeks, so that you have some sense of what you are supposed to be doing.

Besides that, I did the economic issues, mainly trade issues and fisheries, and cross-border environmental issues. This was interesting; the relationship between the consulate, the embassy, Washington and the state governments.

Q: Yes. Let's talk about... Why don't we take fish? To Canadians, fish seems to...

BUTCHER: We have Mom and apple pie. They have fish.

Q: Since the Revolutionary War, fish problems have existed. Why don't we talk about 1991 to 1993 fish problems and what we were doing there?

BUTCHER: Well, we had a framework agreement that was supposed to work out who was going to fish where, when, each season. But each season, you had to negotiate the specifics, and that hadn't been working for several years. Dave Colson, an OES DAS, was the chief negotiator. As in so many things, negotiating among the Americans is as much of a challenge as negotiating with the foreigners.

Q: Who were the principals?

BUTCHER: Washington state, Oregon state, and Alaska were the big ones, plus the native Americans, the tribes. You also had the Canadian tribes, the Canadian provincial governments, and the Canadian federal government.

Q: Was there a pronounced difference between the Alaskan side of things, and the Washington, Oregon side of things?

BUTCHER: Definitely. The Canadians basically wanted to count the fish based on where they spawned, where they came from. They felt they had a right to a lot more of the fish on that basis. The fish are born in the rivers, then go out into the ocean, swimming toward Alaska, and then return. It's a four-year cycle, so every year, you get a different run. Some years are healthier than other years. However much the Alaskans catch, then that run is smaller as it is returning to spawn in British Columbia and Washington State and Oregon, and if it's overfished, that cycle is smaller four years later. The Alaskans always wanted more. They were very insistent. The whole process is set up in the framework agreement. It was quite different from many fields where the federal government has the final say. The Alaskans or the other states seemed to be quite able to dig in their heels.

Q: Were we just reporting on it?

BUTCHER: Yes. Really, we didn't do any of the negotiations. It was Dave Colson and people from OES, and National Marine Fisheries Service. NMFS had an office in Seattle, and they played an important role in all of this. (End of tape)

There were a lot of immigrants in Vancouver from Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Asia. Vancouver was very much in transition. They also had a lot earlier immigration. So, if you saw a person who looked Chinese, you didn't know if they were second or third generation Canadian, or were newly arrived. A lot of people from Hong Kong did come over and invest and buy houses, with all the uncertainty about Hong Kong's reversion to China. Often the wife and kids, or just the kids would stay there. The father would be back in Hong Kong, until they saw which way the wind was blowing on Hong Kong. So, you had a lot of very wealthy, quite unsupervised teenage kids. They also had a lot of Canadians coming from the east. The economy was much better in British Columbia in those days, very attractive. It's a wonderful place to live. Lots of Eastern Europeans, South Asians, a whole range of ethnic mixture among teenagers my daughter went to school with. It did also still have somewhat of a British flavor, especially in Victoria.

Q: How about the environment? Did you all get involved in environmental affairs?

BUTCHER: Yes. There were environmental issues wrapped up with trade issues and labor issues. That is exactly what environmental issues are and should be. Forest issues, of course. What stumpage fees should they charge the logging companies? Could they export round logs or did they have to be processed? Then, we also had situations where there were rivers that crossed the border, where they were dams upstream on rivers going into Washington State, or one river that would flood the Canadian side because it wasn't controlled on the U.S. And air pollution issues, and Canadians' concerns about the Hanford nuclear site in Washington State.

Q: Did you have direct connections to Washington State?

BUTCHER: Yes. The governor and the prime minister set up regular meetings. This was all cooperative. I don't even remember whose initiative it was, but one of the things I'm sure every new governor, every provincial leader is going to say, "Oh, we are going to have better and closer, and more cooperative relationships." So, it started while we were there, but I'm not sure if it had gone on earlier. They met every six months or so. They would have the meeting with all of the heads of the relevant agencies, with an agenda, with David or me mostly observing. It was very good and very useful. Some people seemed to think we were trying to play the nanny or something. I think the direct relationship was very appropriate and useful, but it was also really appropriate that we be a part of it to keep an eye on whether there were issues coming up that might affect broader bilateral issues, or international issues.

Q: Well, NAFTA must have been on the front pages, or not? The Bush administration, and you were there during the end of it, up through 1993, but Clinton picked up with NAFTA. Within the next year or so, pushed it through.

BUTCHER: My husband worked on it. He was on the Canada desk back here. But in Vancouver we weren't involved in the negotiations, or even much selling it to the public.

Q: Were we watching Canadian politics there?

BUTCHER: Sure.

Q: What was happening at that point?

BUTCHER: The NDP, which was center left, was in power in B.C. while we were there. The rightist Alliance was just beginning to gain a foothold, including with our neighbor across the street. The country was going through one of its efforts to figure out the role of Quebec in the country, and there was a lot of discussion of that. Actually, Dave was the one, the Consul General, who did more of the political contacting, reporting and all of that.

Bill Clinton's first trip outside the U.S. as president was to Vancouver to meet Boris Yeltsin. We were involved with the advance teams in all the logistics, selecting sites, etc., of course, but the main awkward thing I remember was over what the Canadian role would be. The Prime Minister was coming and he, or at least his staffers, seemed to want to make this practically a trilateral rather than a friendly third-country venue for a bilateral.

Q: People who serve in Ottawa, Americans, get a little bit tired of saying, "Oh, big you, and little us," as far as the Canadians would say. "You have to be extra nice to us because we are so small." Did you get a lot of that there?

BUTCHER: I did find that very tiresome because I went there not expecting that. I expected Canadians to be much more self-confident and proud. There is so much about Canada that I admire that I was very surprised to get some of that feeling. It was interesting later dealing with the Australians. I didn't get that sense...Australia's size and role in the world are similar in many ways to the Canadians, but no inferiority complex there, whereas the Canadians were often sensitive.

Q: Sometimes Canadians define themselves as being not Americans.

BUTCHER: Have you seen or heard about the beer ads? "I am a Canadian."

Q: Yes.

BUTCHER: I think that is pretty fun.

Q: What about trade issues there? Were there any great problems?

BUTCHER: Of course, lumber was always a big, huge issue. Then, we had other things like wine. Fruits and vegetables and issues about whether certain FDA requirements were really for food safety or the where they trade barrier. There were issues about milk. We would do some reporting, but most of that was going on in Washington.

Q: How about the cultural wars? It really wasn't a war, but it was the Canadians feeling they were threatened by American publication, TV broadcasts. I always think of the western Canadian who is not being as bothered by some of this stuff as the overly British people who are in Ottawa.

BUTCHER: No, no, they were bothered. This was part of this defensiveness that I was talking about before. We didn't get involved much in the cultural trade issues. I do remember our guy from USIA was working on social studies curriculum issues. My husband dealt with that when he was back on the desk. My daughter, in 10th grade social studies - what an education for her to study social studies from a different perspective. Her teacher tried to tell her that Maryland was pronounced "Mary Land," like the Canadians pronounce "New Found Land." My son, in fourth grade, was taught about the traders during settlement. Even there, you could see the message, "Those nasty Americans were trying to take over, or had an unfair advantage," or whatever.

Q: The trading wars in that area.

BUTCHER: Yes. It's very much there. I don't particularly remember getting involved in issues except for the USIA guy, but it was very much a part of life.

Q: I wouldn't think of it being a problem. Obviously, your sister consular general to the south, Tijuana, is loaded with people in jail. But, I can't imagine people going up to Canada to blow off steam. Maybe I'm wrong.

BUTCHER: Certainly we had drugs and immigration issues. We would do extradition papers and stuff like that. We had problems with Americans not realizing you can't bring a gun into Canada, or even mace.

Q: There weren't a bunch of Americans in jail, particularly?

BUTCHER: We had four consular officers. There must have been Americans in jail, but it was not a big issue.

Q: It seems like British Columbia, particularly Vancouver, was being a chapel of the west. Did it seem to be going through a transformation, almost through removing itself from Ottawa and all that?

BUTCHER: The Canadians are forever consulting themselves about their relationship with Quebec and how they are going to organize themselves as a nation. We did go to some of these rounds of consultations, but a lot of people sort of felt like, "Here we go again." I was there only two years. People who lived there for 20, 30, or 40 years of their life must find this repetitive, if nothing else. Yet, on the other hand, they don't fight, they talk and talk and talk. They have public meetings and town meetings, and exchanges in the newspapers. I have great respect for Canadians. Here, people tend to yell at each other more, but there they will talk and talk and talk about an issue, until they reach consensus. There are issues where they haven't been able to reach a consensus, but they aren't just going to hold out and have somebody win and somebody lose. They will talk and talk.

Q: How did you find your impression of the Canadian medical system and its delivery service? By marriage, I have a Canadian cousin who is debating on whether... She has been down to American hospitals from time to time. There seems to be some problems. I was wondering what you were noticing, in your official and unofficial capacity?

BUTCHER: Unofficially, I will never forget the day my son was sick and we called our doctor and he said, "I'm about to leave, I'll stop by your house on my way home." He came by the house on his bicycle. I have a picture of him on his bicycle. That is such a typical experience with the Canadians, in general. They are warm, and wonderful and not this horrible, big and impersonal government health system that some people fear in "socialized medicine." We had a wonderful relationship with an individual doctor that we were able to choose. At the same time, one of our employees was on a waiting list for a hip replacement. She had been on medical leave for months and months when I got there. The waiting lists were real, even then. Now, I gather that they have budget problems just like all governments have budget problems. There are cuts and waits and so on, but our personal experience with the medical profession was very positive. I wish the United States would do the same.

Q: In 1993, what happened?

BUTCHER: In 1993, we came back and I went to S/P, Policy Planning, with Jim Steinberg and did mostly UN issues, some environmental issues.

Q: You were 1993 to?

BUTCHER: 1996.

Q: Policy Planning. This is Clinton time. Policy planning is whatever the secretary kind of makes of it. Sometimes it is speech writing. Other times it is policy planning, other times it is God knows what. It's a parking place for the brain people the secretary needs for other things. What was your impression of Policy Planning, at this time?

BUTCHER: Samuel Lewis was the director. He was not there very long after I came. Then, Jim Steinberg came in. Steinberg was closer to the secretary, when Albright came in, and that made a big difference. There were not very many Foreign Service people. It was mostly schedule B, I guess. We just divided up the world so that we each had an area to look after. It was a group who tried to pull things together, look at things broadly. In many ways, we did, I think, duplicate or provide another viewpoint on stuff that the bureaus were doing. But, the Secretary didn't know how to work with the rest of the building either.

Q: This is Christopher.

BUTCHER: This is Christopher, and then Steinberg came in with Albright.

Q: Well, Steinberg had been there before too. He had been doing something with Christopher. I mentioned Steinberg when we did an oral history roundtable, and he was one of his think tankers.

BUTCHER: That's right, Albright was at the UN. Jim's relationship with Albright was there even then. He clearly had a good relationship with her, was able to talk to her about issues, even while she was in New York. Staff meetings in S/P were wonderful because you would range around the world, talking about hot issues of the day, but in longer-term perspective, a broader perspective. Jim did planning, more in the sense of the new year is coming and how are we going to fit together our approach to the G-7 Summit, APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) Summit, or whatever, and what are we going to address where, tying things together. But, he didn't even know how to use his own staff, much less the building. I tried to link with the bureaus, mainly IO, trying to get information and ideas from them and pass down to them what the thinking was on the seventh floor. We were working on PDD-25, the presidential decision document on peacekeeping, which was trying to set a policy on when we were going to support and not support peacekeeping operations. By then, peacekeeping had become so expensive. You asked before if Jesse Helms was much of a factor. Well, by then, Jesse Helms was a huge factor. Our UN dues were way behind, both the regular dues and for peacekeeping. Trying to get some order to decision owhen are we going to participate and when are we not. Trying to define that in a piece of paper became very cumbersome and contentious between the White House, State and the Hill.

Q: The Pentagon too, I imagine.

BUTCHER: Definitely. By then, you are looking not only at when are we going to pay for things, but when are we actually going to participate. When are American soldiers going to be there? I frankly don't know how much difference that piece of paper has made in deciding when we are going to get involved or not. You look at something like Sierra Leone. I was reading this morning that the chair of the appropriations subcommittee has slashed U.S. peacekeeping dues. I thought this was because he would have thought that we don't have a clear national interest there. But, he said it was because he felt like the United States had rolled over and given in to these brutal murderers... Okay, so does he think we should be there? Americans there, our money, our men? There are just very difficult issues that really have to be looked at case by case, but in the context of realizing what is going on in a broader sense. I don't know how much that PDD-25 itself actually changed any decision, but it was at least trying to lay out for the Congress that we are not just doing these things willy nilly, that this is an overall guidance. We did tons of Congressional testimony and reporting to the Congress and brochures about peacekeeping, and trying to spell out the U.S. interest. We were trying to convince a Congress, many of whom didn't even carry passports, that the U.S. had an interest in participating and making these international efforts successful, rather than trying to do everything unilateral.

Q: You were talking about that you were there during a really rather revolutionary election of 1994, when a very conservative candidate, who was unfocused or knew nothing (whatever you want to call it), and a Republican Congress came in under the leadership of Newt Gingrich...

BUTCHER: Exactly. That is what I was saying. I forget the number, but there was a large percentage of Congress that didn't even have a passport.

Q: And took great pleasure in that. We are still recovering, if we have recovered from it.

BUTCHER: Very frustrating.

Q: Talking a little bit about where you were, Policy Planning, which is supposed to be sort of the think tank of the secretary... But, I have a feeling that Warren Christopher was not much of a planner, but acting on a case-by-case basis. He is a good lawyer. Jim Steinberg was sort of a speechwriter and a very bright person, but the brightness was coming within. It's not a system tank.BUTCHER: Jim is very bright, but definitely not a system type. The speechwriters were not in there, they were separate. They were in PA (Public Affairs). We would work with them on issues, but they weren't part of S/P. I think they are back in S/P now.

Q: Did you have a feel for why Sam Lewis left?

BUTCHER: Frustration on both parts, I think. He would try to do think pieces. I had the impression that the secretary wanted somebody who was going to be more operationally involved in the day-to-day stuff, rather more than a think tank sort of thing. Jim Steinberg did that. He was very much involved. One thing I did find very frustrating was that when our Africa person left, Jim did not replace him. There was no one on the policy planning staff who covered Africa or had expertise on Africa. I was the UN person, so I got involved in many of the Africa meetings and clearances, but I had no Africa background. It was really bad that we weren't focused, especially on Rwanda.

Q: What was your impression of our representation, our interest, in the United Nations, at the time that you were seeing this?

BUTCHER: Madeleine Albright was terrific. I thought she was a very good representative, with good strong ties in administration. But, that whole relationship with the Hill was just very difficult.

Q: Then, let's talk about Rwanda. Could you explain what happened and what we were doing?

BUTCHER: It was during the time after Somalia where we were very skittish about anything. The Congress would not pay for anything. They did not want Americans involved in anything. Rwanda was one of those situations where if you are going to go in, it's going to take a substantial commitment. I did get very tired of hearing people blaming the UN, both for Somalia and for Rwanda. It's the permanent members of the Security Council who have to define whether the United Nations is going to be able to do anything. We did not do what would have been needed to prevent or stop genocide in Rwanda. So, it was a very frustrating time. I remember talking with Bob Oakley and others a lot about the experience of Somalia and the impact on the U.S. The whole idea of peacekeeping has changed, because traditionally UN peacekeepers from outside the region went into situations where you needed a third party to help build confidence. They were not an armed force that was going to impose anything. If there were situations where armed force was going to make the difference, it was going to be the French going in, rather than the UN. So, in the mid-90's UN peacekeeping was really going through a transition. Jim Steinberg and I talked a lot about the role of regional powers, like Russia in the Caucasus and Nigeria in Liberia. Until that time, you would purposely not have anyone from the region participating in the peacekeeping mission.

Q: The Indonesians.

BUTCHER: The Canadians, Pakistanis, Fiji, peacekeepers from outside the region. During this time, there was a real shift. People became convinced that the UN couldn't do everything. Should the UN bless action by regional entities? Then, you get into, "What's the role of the Russians?" You can look at the good old days when the UN was just a neutral party, and yet if you don't have colonial power, are the Africans going to be able to develop their own...?

Q: Well, the British used to put troops in. They could have been in Tanzania, and Kenya. At other times, the French were doing it up until very recently.

BUTCHER: And the United States and Latin America.

Q: Yes.

BUTCHER: For good or ill. Not necessarily good.Q: But often it stopped something. The Dominican Republic stopped it.

BUTCHER: But now, if you try to put in a peacekeeping operation in a situation that is not ripe for a peacekeeping operation, does thajust drag the UN into an ongoing conflict? If you have a democratic government, should we defend it in some way if it's under attack? The role of the OAS in the western hemisphere on democracy has become quite effective now, not with military forces.

Q: Were these subjects debated?

BUTCHER: In S/P. That is exactly the kinds of things that we talked about.

Q: Where did you feel we were coming down, or you might be coming down one place, but Steinberg and Christopher were coming down somewhere?

BUTCHER: No, it was more often that we were coming down somewhere, but the Congress wasn't. We were constantly trying to make the case for an appropriate U.S. and UN role....

Q: Did you feel that what our concerns were, were being dictated by CNN or television? I'm thinking about some of the... For example, probably the world's greatest tragedy that has been going on now for 10, 12 years, is the Sudan, but you can't get television in there. A million or more people have been killed. It just goes on, but in other places, as soon as you start seeing starving children or children or adults mutilated, or what have you... And this was beginning to hit at your time, wasn't it?

BUTCHER: Exactly. The CNN factor is one of many things that were debated, talked about. It had an impact on what the Congress was interested in. But, I don't know what you do about it. You have to recognize it as you are addressing issues, you have to try to figure what are our interests, what are our capabilities. Part of assessing our capabilities is what do you have support for, where do you have support to take action?

Q: Was policy planning, at this point, pretty much involved in the day-to-day problems? I mean, there is a slaughter going on in Rwanda, you have to do something about it, or were there people who were thinking about: What if Iran does this, or What happens if North Korea does that, looking ahead, or was it pretty much dealing with what was going on?

BUTCHER: Some of that, but more of the looking ahead was just looking at, "Okay, what do we have in the coming year?" This was Steinberg, who is very, very political, looking at the G-7 and the APEC and the plan, "Okay, is the president going to participate, is the secretary going to participate? How can we use these events to address policy issues?" I would say there was actually more of that kind of planning than the other. Although, I also remember talking about North Africa and its relationship with Europe, that kind of thing. You have EUR here and you have NEA over there. That kind of an issue probably wasn't going to be addressed that much anywhere except S/P.

Q: Were you running down to the bureaus or were they running up to you?

BUTCHER: Constantly, I think that is partly because I am a Foreign Service Officer. Many of the other people in S/P came from the outside and I don't know if they have that close a relationship with the bureau, but I spent a lot of time, for example, with the deputy director of the peacekeeping office, an office which didn't even exist when I was in IO.

When I was in IO, we did peacekeeping in IO/UNP. After I left, it broke out to be a separate office. Bob was working all hours of the night on drafts and redrafts of PDD-25. Molly Williams was the Principal DAS.

Q: What is her background?BUTCHER: She is over at Commerce now. She had been Consul General in Jerusalem, NEA background.

Q: A very important job.

BUTCHER: She is wonderful. She is wonderful on policy, wonderful as a manager. She was my boss in IO.

Q: I'm looking forward to catching her when she gets out. Peter Romero?

BUTCHER: Pete is, I believe, still Acting Assistant Secretary for ARA. I don't think he has ever been confirmed.

Q: But, did you feel that there was basically a certain disconnect between Policy Planning and the rest of the State Department?

BUTCHER: Definitely. Jim didn't even know how to use the Policy Planning staff, much less the rest of the building. It was often tiresome to hear disdain from people who didn't really work with the building, but it worked both ways. There was an unfortunate disconnect there. You hear many people talk about Madeleine Albright as a professor, and as a mentor, and would like to have good relationships with the bureaus and so on, but in a big bureaucracy it just doesn't happen. It takes a lot of figuring out how to get those communications flows going up and down. One thing that Strobe Talbott and Jim Steinberg started, which I thought was great, was a "mega talker." I'm sure the bureaus thought this was just a bother, but what they were trying to do was every week we would put together, maybe 20 issues, on what the U.S. talking points were. Strobe Talbott, at first, wanted them for his own use, but also it worked if, for example, you had the Assistant Secretary for one region traveling somewhere and someone asks him about something in another region, he would have, in a nutshell, what our policy is. Of course, iwas really time consuming for us and the bureaus every week, negotiating what issues would be covered, agreeing on language, getting clearances.

Q: Could you spell that?

BUTCHER: M - e - g - a - T- a - l - k - e - r - s, mega talkers. It was one of those things that became a bureaucratic process, and yet I thought it was a good idea to try to get everybody on the same sheet. In the process of negotiating what the mega talkers were going to say, you are also creating policy.

Q: Creating policy - absolutely. This is how things are done and it is also a very good technique.

BUTCHER: I don't know if they have survived, if it is still happening.

Q: Well, by 1996, the election came, but you left before the election came. What did you do?

BUTCHER: I moved to EAP, as Director of Pacific Island Affairs. Why Pacific Island Affairs? Why me? Sandra O'Leary called me up one day. She was a DAS in EAP. She said, "Have you thought about bidding on this?" Of course, I hadn't thought at all. I looked into it a little. There were quite a few UN votes there. There were environmental issues, which I had worked on in OES. I learned later that EAP was trying to increase its number of women in office director positions. So they were reaching out beyond what would be their normal, tight little EAP circle. It was something I would have never thought of. It worked out very well. After I was there for a year, we merged the Australian/New Zealand office with Pacific Islands to become EAP/ANP.

Q: You were at EAP from when to when?

BUTCHER: 1996 to 1998, and then I retired at the end of 1998. Q: Let's talk about the Pacific Islands. I just finished a series of interviews with Bill Bodde. In fact, I have talked with quite a few people. I have even gone out to Pohnpei.

BUTCHER: You have?

Q: I spent a week as a retired consular officer, helping teach a class to the Federated States of Micronesia consular course.

BUTCHER: Excellent. When did you do that?

Q: Oh, it was about four years ago. Anyway, I can't speak with great authority, but a little authority. Let's talk about the islands first. What was the geographic area you were dealing with?

BUTCHER: All of the independent nations of the Pacific. We did not cover Tahiti, which is French. We did not cover Guam and American Samoa, but we did cover most of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. It was 14 countries.

Q: Were the negotiations pretty well over? Were things pretty well in place, by this time?

BUTCHER: You're talking about negotiations with the Micronesians?

Q: Micronesians.

BUTCHER: Okay. They were over, but beginning again. Palau had become independent before I came in. I think that was in 1994, something like that. That was the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. The negotiations went on and on, and eventually ended up with the Marianas remaining a U.S. territory, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia became independent with a "Compact of Free Association" with the U.S., and finally Palau became independent. Palau is smaller, but FSM and the Marshalls cover an enormous space in the Pacific. I heard that the Marshall Islands cover territory as large as the United States from the Mississippi River east, and the total land area is less than the District of Columbia. FSM is even more spread out, made up of four island groupings.

Q: What about Vanuatu? That is basically Solomon Islands, isn't it?

BUTCHER: No. Separate countries in Melanesia. Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. We had an embassy in Port Moresby that covered the three of those. With the islands is you have 14 countries, and you have a zillion small issues, things that usually don't hit anybody's radar screen. The main conflict that did develop was the secession movement in Bougainville. The New Zealanders and the Australians tried mediating. We had the whole issue of whether the UN would come in.

Q: Now Bougainville, was this French? No.

BUTCHER: No, PNG was an Australian trust territory after WWI until independence in the '70's. The Australians still give them aid and still had a lot of people actually working in the government, a very close relationship like we have with the Micronesians. We had a small embassy there. We were worried about security for our people, because of the terrible crime in the city...

Q: I'm told it's just not a very nice place to be.

BUTCHER: Well, like so many places, it could be just wonderful. I didn't get out of the city. I only visited Port Moresby, but there are wonderful resources in that country if they could be harnessed.

Q: What was the issue on Bougainville?BUTCHER: There was a very rich copper mine there. The people of Bougainville were not getting the benefits from the mine. There were sporadic killings by the government and by the insurgents for years and years. I think it was since 1986 that had been going on. The mining companies pulled out, so nobody was getting any benefits from this mine. The New Zealanders brought people from the insurgents and from the government to New Zealand to negotiate in Christchurch, eating meals together, living together, getting them out of the context of the conflict on the island. They reached an agreement. I haven't followed it since then, but I gather it's been successful. The UN finally sent in a very small mission. Of course, in East Timor, the UN has gone in a huge way, but in Bougainville, they wouldn't. Again, it's a question of the UN not being able to do everything everywhere. It was the New Zealanders who made this one work.

We also had that terrible tidal wave on the north shore of PNG, with a 1,000 people killed. It happened to be right when Madeleine Albright was on her way to Australia and was planning to stop in Port Moresby for a few hours. I think a lot of people thought that she went there just because of the tidal wave, but it was already planned.

Q: Yesterday, I was interviewing a former Congressman who dealt with this quite a bit, Steven Solarz.

BUTCHER: I worked for him.

Q: He was saying he got stuck with it. He was asked to do a political payoff for them, but he was dealing with the islands.

BUTCHER: He was the chair of the Asian subcommittee.

Q: He was saying that in looking at it, the results of the disaster were complete dependence. He said that you would go to one of these islands, which is teaming in fish, and the people there would be feeding you out of a can of tuna, which was canned God knows where, because they lost the interest or knowledge of fishing.

BUTCHER: Yes. People's diets in many of these countries contribute to a lot of diabetes, a lot of high blood pressure. These are really difficult issues about how these very, very tiny places exist in this world in a way that draws on and retains their own culture and capabilities. The whole business of money laundering and the Russians banks trying to get into some of these countries could look very attractive if a Russian bank wants to establish offshore presence and pump money into your local treasury. There were a lot of these issues. Tonga had made a lot of money from part of the spectrum because they had gotten their dibs in early and established rights they could sell.

Q: I know we were having trouble on some of our places where we allowed them to issue visas. The next thing we knew, it was a passport.

BUTCHER: Yes. Many of the countries would start to issue passports.

Q: To Iranians.

BUTCHER: Exactly. What does it take to become a citizen of one of these small countries? What does a passport actually mean?

You asked if the negotiations were finished with the former American trust territories. Not only were those negotiations finished but the big issue while I was there was, "Let's get started on the next round of the negotiations," because the agreements only ran until 2001 or 2002. This is with the FSM and Marshalls. The Palau agreement goes on longer, because they became independent later. The Marshallese kept pushing us to get started on the negotiations. To some extent, I think it's because many of their people who do the negotiating enjoyed getting the trips to Washington so often.

Q: One had the feeling that these people were milking our government for everything it was worth, because of so many trips and consultations.

BUTCHER: Well, it's a difficult issue when they have been so totally dependent. The agreement at the time of independence continued not only monetarily, but in government services. When I got off the ferry in Kwajalein, we were picked up in a van that had a little sign that said it was their special ed bus. They get funding for their special ed kids, just like Arlington, Virginia gets funding for its special education kids out of the Department of Education budget. This isn't in the foreign aid budget. They still get services from U.S. federal agencies as though they were a state. That is going to be an enormous issue in the next round of negotiations. What continues, what doesn't? Should this be shifted over to more of a bilateral relationship where any assistance they get is as foreign aid, or should we continue to provide direct government services as we have?

Q: Well, while you were dealing with these issues, did you find that Congress, like the Interior subcommittee was playing a much greater role?

BUTCHER: Certainly, much greater than they would have if they were dealing with Central America or something. It was the Foreign Affairs Committee that was involved with most countries, whereas with the Micronesians, it was the Interior subcommittees and the Department of Interior as well that was administering all of these programs. It wasn't the State Department that was administering.

Q: This wasn't that long ago - 1996 to 1998. Did you feel that there was a growing distance, lack of interest, on the part of our government with this, or was there sort of the resignation that the islanders were going to be with us forever, and are going to be our wards forever, or go and earn your own living?

BUTCHER: Oh, a mixture, I think. Certainly, a lack of interest as far as... Stanley Ross, who had worked for Solarz on the Hill, was the Assistant Secretary. He was a friend from when I worked for Solarz. He knew about the islands. I'm sure he will be very involved in the negotiations, but this was not something he did or should have spent many hours in a week on. The president of the Marshall Islands came to visit once. We scheduled an appointment with Tom Pickering, who was Under Secretary. The president was "indisposed," and didn't show up until a couple of hours late. Pickering did receive him and made the points so well and so clearly, because this was a point where we were basically telling them to shape up. That president is out now.

Q: Is this the one who had larded the diplomatic corps, with his relatives?

BUTCHER: Oh...

Q: I guess they all do.

BUTCHER: They all do. Yes. I wish the Marshallese well. I certainly hope that they have a more effective government now then they did when I was there. Pickering was so good at making the points. During the meeting, he did not have a piece of paper in front of him, but he made exactly the points that needed to be made that were in the briefer that were given him, in a diplomatic, but firm way. That, very-once-in-a-while attention was all that was needed from the seventh floor. Basically, the negotiations are... Al Stayman, who was the director of the Interior office when I was there, is now the chief negotiator. He knows this stuff inside and out from way back. Basically, while I was there, I could not see any reason why we should gear up for negotiations early. The Marshallese wanted to gear up for negotiations early so that they would have a guarantee of what they were going to get so they could borrow against future income. They had already spent all of their money by borrowing against it. So, we told them no.

Q: Were we concerned at all about other powers, like the Chinese, Japanese, or Russians, anybody else, messing around there?

BUTCHER: Not nearly as much as we had been in the first round of negotiations. In the first round of negotiations, it was still very much a Cold War kind of concern. That was why we threw so much money at it. But, of course, we still had the Kwajalein missile test range in the Marshall Islands, which is an enormous investment, $4 billion I'd heard. To replicate it somewhere else would be very expensive, but not impossible. The Marshallese always figured that they could get anything they wanted out of us, both because of the legacy of nuclear testing and because we needed Kwajalein. We will see where those negotiations go. All of the discussions going on now about missile defense and what programs are going to be carried out and where I'm sure will play into those negotiations.

Q: Did you find that in the East Asian Pacific bureau that your issues were sort of a minor footnote?

BUTCHER: Definitely, but that was fine. That was appropriate. Having spent years and years doing Latin America issues and then doing global issues, this was the first time I worked in EAP. All the staff meetings were a totally different world. I didn't feel neglected, either by (Assistant Secretaries) Winston Lord or Stanley Ross. If we needed them, they were there, but in general, they weren't involved. It's actually kind of a nice director position to have. It was like when I was the Venezuela desk officer. That was better than to have been Nicaragua desk officer at that time, because I was in charge much more than I would have been, if it had been issues that went farther up. Same way, in the Pacific Islands, most of the issues did not need to go higher. Rea Brazeal was our DAS. She had been ambassador in Micronesia. She was very much involved. There were a zillion different issues, but most of them, we dealt with, with other agencies, rather than going up the line.

Q: Well, you moved over, and you were dealing with Australia and?

BUTCHER: Australia and New Zealand.Q: During this last year, 1997-1998 period, how were relations with New Zealand? We had gone through this no-nuclear thing, were we still kind of distant from them?

BUTCHER: No, we had a very good relationship with them, more for economic reasons, because they had really gone to a much less socialized economic system than they had had before. They were seen as the darling of the free traders. There was a bit of that old tension still around, and particular restraints on what we could do with military cooperation. We were doing a lot of sessions about where we were headed with all of this. Of course, now with the new government, I haven't kept up with what has happened. I suspect that the relationship is not as easy as it was. While I was there, the relationship focused on...

Q: What type of government did they have? Was it essentially a Tory sort? I'm told that the Brits who emigrated to New Zealand in the 1930s were coming right out of the left wing of the labor party, and they gave it that cast.

BUTCHER: On the whole, yes. Just like with the Canadians. When you talk about conservative Canadians, conservative Canadians would be, maybe centrist Democrats in the United States. I think that is probably true with the New Zealanders as well. Then again, when you get to health care and the role of the government in the economy, they had made a 180 on the role of the government in the economy. They were not leftists at all, in that sense, during the time I was there.

Q: What about Australia? We have always had good, solid relations, but it gets strained. I think it was Tex Harris I was interviewing, who had been there and was saying that the Australians would keep talking about "your bases here." We've got American-Australian bases there, and this was being used to beat us on the head by the left wing. How were things going during this time?

BUTCHER: The relationship was really very good. We had annual ministerials with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State. That was always a big, big deal to arrange each year, covering the waterfront of all the issues. It really showed the depth of good consultations on a range of world issues, economic and military, and yet things would happen. Something with wheat is going to send the Australians into the stratosphere - something that we do for domestic reasons or whatever that affects their wheat. I found them very easy to work witself-confident partners. That was pleasant. I, frankly, did not spend all that much time, myself, working on the Australian issues because they, in general, chugged along with good cooperation, including strong ties at senior levels. For example, our agriculture people, I'm sure, were working directly with their agriculture people. If we were trying to negotiate exactly what we were going to say in the statement from the ministerials about this or that specific thing, it had domestic, political ramifications for them and for us. So, it is not that there weren't issues, but you can yell at each other and slap each other on the back and have a beer.

Q: Did you find, also, that the Australians and New Zealanders had effective embassies? Same embassies, work broadly, including the other departments and Congress, and the media and all. Others try to deal just with the State Department. It doesn't work very well.

BUTCHER: The Canadians, of course, are so good at working the whole U.S. government, the Australians and the New Zealanders also. The Australians and the New Zealanders also worked with the Pacific islanders' embassies here. The islanders had a hard time. Their people generally didn't have a lot of experience. The new Fiji ambassador was really trying to work with the Hill on sugar and things like that, which was good. On the other hand, you always worry about them getting ripped off by the so-called "lobbyists." The Micronesians end up spending so much on consultants, lobbyists and so on.

Q: I was doing another one of these consular trips, and I went to Kyrgyzstan. It had just opened up, more or less. They were asking about an offer to open the first honorary consul. I asked them who was saying this. They responded that some people were saying this and it was going to be in Las Vegas. I told them, "Don't touch that with a ten foot pole." If nothing else, it sends the message that Las Vegas signifies corruption, whether it is or not. I told them not to do it. There are people out there trying to take advantage.

BUTCHER: Yes. Our ambassador to Fiji, Don Gevirtz, was a businessman who did great work with the Fiji government in trying to build up their trade relations with U.S. exports to Fiji and Fiji to the U.S., working with a lot of different contacts from California. That was good.

Q: How did you find it was dealing with these ambassadors to these specific islands, because they tended to be political appointees, or not?

BUTCHER: Some were and some weren't. You aren't going to get a political appointee to go to Port Moresby. Of course Ambassador Berman in Wellington was the most political. And Ambassador Gevirtz in Fiji was a businessman. He was political, but very good.

Q: Well, he was bringing something besides just diplomat experience. They needed business experience.

BUTCHER: I gather he was hard to work for. I don't know that he knew how to use the rest of the embassy well. Sometimes, they had to say, "Whoa, that is not really appropriate," and reign in his ideas, but he was very good. Palau was covered by our ambassador in the Philippines. In FSM, we didn't have an ambassador there the whole time I was there, because the White House didn't get around to naming anybody, and then the Hill didn't confirm anybody. That was terribly unfortunate, because the FSM, in many ways, has its act together better than the Marshall Islands did. We should honor that by having an ambassador there. There was a good DCM who was acting, and she did a good job. We have an ambassador out there now, Diane Watson, from California, who I think had chaired the education and labor subcommittee in the California state senate. This was good experience for dealing with all these questions of domestic programs... They have this question of, "Are we going to continue U.S. agency activities there, or turn it into more of a foreign aid relationship," and the whole issues of social services, social programs, education, health and all of that. People had been talking with her before she went out, and she had not been confirmed yet when I left. We had talked. I hope it works out. She seems like a very dynamic woman. It seemed like it was going to be a good match. Joan Plaisted was the ambassador to the Marshall Islands, a Foreign Service officer who had been there for several years. I don't know. The Marshall Islands are just such a difficult relationship, in so many ways. I hope she does a good job out there, but it's a difficult role for anybody.

Q: Is the problem essentially that it's a corrupt government?

BUTCHER: Yes. A lot of corruption and a lot of legacy of dependency, plus having a hugely important missile base there. It gives it a sense of entitlement that it not conducive to sensible economic planning or a very comfortable relationship. Let's see, Marshall Islands, Pohnpei, Palau, Port Moresby, and Fiji, that's it. The other countries were all covered from those embassies... like Fiji covered Tonga. Oh, Samoa.

Q: Okay, let's talk about Samoa.

BUTCHER: It's covered out of Wellington. The ambassador is accredited there. In fact, I heard that ambassador Charles Murphy Brown had just gone out there to Wellington, and that he has taken a great interest in Samoa. Ambassador Berman was just making a yearly visit. That was about it. Bill Warren was charge' in Samoa. He had been in my office the first year, and then went out for the second. He was good. We didn't have huge difficult issues with Samoa.

Q: Of course, you probably had a certain soft spot in your heart for them because of the peacekeeping.

BUTCHER: Well, Fiji as well. The Fijians did a lot of peacekeeping. Per capita, there were more Fiji soldiers peacekeeping than anybody I guess. The only issue I remember getting kind of difficult with Samoa was a couple of Americans went out and established "reeducation" centers for difficult American teenagers. This was one that the charge' rightly was keeping an eye on, and yet, there apparently wasn't anything illegal.

Q: As a lone consular officer, I could see putting a bunch of difficult, young American teenagers in the middle of an island somewhere. It could get out of hand by being too brutal or by being too lax. It sounds like parents paying somebody to take their kids far away.

BUTCHER: And fix them. Well, Fiji, of course, has all of the issues of their government. They had had the double coup. The prime minister began the process of negotiations with the Indo-Fiji islands that lead to the elections. It just seems like an excellent reconciliation, of bringing back together the two ethnic communities in what I hoped would work in the new government.

Q: As we speak.

BUTCHER: As we speak. I don't know. Have you heard anything today?

Q: No, I haven't, except I think there has been a military coup with hostages.

BUTCHER: But, it's not military. That's the thing. That is very significant; that the military has not joined the rebels.

Q: But, I think there is a hostage situation.

BUTCHER: The prime minister is being held in the parliament building.

Q: The Indian labor came to Fiji because of working the plantations.

BUTCHER: Generations ago.

Q: This has happened in New Caledonia, I think. I think there were Tonkanese. This has happened in a lot of these islands. Those islanders aren't very good at hard work.

BUTCHER: But in Fiji, the current population is split just about 50-50 between native Fijians and Indo-Fijians. I heard the work ethic question explained once that, if you lived in Minnesota for generations and generations, the culture developed to save and put back for the hard winters, and so on. If you live in the islands, there is a culture of everybody shares everything, and you do just what you need to to get by because everybody is going to get by just fine. So it makes it very difficult for anybody to save and invest, or to begin to enterprise businesses. If you have anything, you are socially obligated to share it with your family and neighbors, so individual incentives are not strong.

Q: I read pieces about how they would establish a small store, and everybody would run up a line of credit, and the guy would declare bankruptcy. The store was essentially a way of making everybody happy for a while.

BUTCHER: You can't deny credit to your family and your neighbor. Ambassador Gevirtz got an American shopping center established there. That was quite new and different. He was really trying to create opportunities for American exports and investments. He opened up the market. For some reason, we couldn't export chicken and red meat. So, there were a lot of the usual commercial promotional kinds of stuff, but doing it in that island context was quite a challenge. He did it very well.

Q: Well, Suzanne, I think we are at the end.BUTCHER: Yes. Then, I retired December 31, 1998.

Q: What have you been doing since?

BUTCHER: I did it for 29 wonderful years. It was great, but since I turned 50, I have moved on to other things. The main thing I'm doing is disability advocacy and support. It is really kind of fun to see how what I do now parallels to many of the things I did in the Department. If we are dealing with the county government or the state government or foreign governments, negotiating public policy issues, support for people with disabilities, it's the same. You are negotiating within your own group, and then negotiating with others.

Q: Great, well, good luck to you, putting these skills to work. Thank you very much.

End of interview